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[BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.]

THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VI.

But I will reign and govern still,
And always give the law.
And have each subject at my will,
And all to stand in awe.
But 'gainst my batteries if I find
These storm or vex me sore,
As if thou set me as a blind,
I'll never love thee more.

"IRENE, my fair, worshipped idol, dare I venture to speak the feelings that are burning and struggling within me?" whispered Eustace Villiers as he half sat, half reclined on a low ottoman at the feet of the beautiful blind girl.

It was his ordinary position of late, was that lover-like, suppliant attitude.

He would cast himself and remain for hours together on that low, luxurious cushion, his eyes riveted on the face which was so wondrous fair, and which could be devoured with such impunity by admiring and lawless eyes.

Alas, for the unconscious girl, she knew not that her beauty was the object of such unrestrained gaze; she knew not that a hand was oft-times placed gently on her fair form in cautious and unfelt caress. She was but grateful for the watchful care, the skillful attention that lightened the hours of her weary darkness by such varied powers of attraction and charm.

The honeyed words came on her ear with a kind of mesmeric soothing power on that balmy spring morn when Sir Hugh's absence had left her to the care of the magician who was potent alike to amuse and to protect the helpless one.

Was it love which brought that thrill through her veins, when the accents stole, as it were, over her whole frame?

Irene scarcely knew.

Perhaps, had she paused to reflect, to recall the past, it might have answered the doubt.

As it was, she only knew that a spell was on her that she neither could nor desired to break.

"Irene," resumed the rich, soft voice, "when I leave you with despair and darkness in my heart as deep and as hopeless for me as any your angel self can—"

"Leave me," she interrupted; "leave me—oh, no, no!"

There was a kind of terror in the tone that Eustace comprehended with instinctive penetration.

"Why not, Irene? If you do not, cannot love me, I could not remain. You are too dangerously precious, too madly dear, for me to risk such killing torture, that is well nigh maddening, me even as I speak in these calm, measured tones."

"No, no, no! Do not be so cruel—so abrupt," said the girl, eagerly clasping the hand which sought hers, as if fearing it should escape her, even as she spoke. "I could not live without your kindness and your care, now that I have felt their soothing power. It would be such a dreadful, gloomy blank to lose what has almost made me forget my terrible sorrow. Papa is kind, good, loving, and my very soul is grateful to him with more than a child's love; but you—you have whited away the hours, and brought new life, new thoughts, new interests to divert and cheer me. Do not abandon me—do not go, Eustace."

It was the first time she had uttered his name, and it came like softest music on his ear.

"Have I not told you it was in your own power, Irene?" he said, with resolute calmness of tone. "Either I am dear and necessary to you, and you can speak the word I crave, or you do not love, and can dispense with my care, my devotion, my life, Irene."

He felt her fingers tremble in his.

With a Sphinx-like shrewdness, he read the troubles of her soul.

He knew that she elung to, depended on, feared, but she did not love him, and his lips were wreathed scornfully at the conviction.

"You forget," she faltered, at length; "I am no bride for you, nor any one. And, besides, my father—he would not, he could not give his consent, and—oh, no, it must not be. Let us still be as we have been. I will ever consider you as my dearest, my kindest, my only friend, save my father, Eustace."

It was like a victim writhing in the toils.

Eustace smiled bitterly at the useless, piteous appeal.

"Irene, do you know what love is? Have you ever felt the passion?" he asked, firmly. "Nay, tell me candidly, truly—you cannot deceive me! There is a magnetism that recognizes the kindred feeling in the soul united with it. Tell me; am I not right? Do you not even now cling to some hopeless sentiment, some faithless idol, with wild eagerness?"

A deep vermillion overspread the delicate cheeks that answered too plainly the question.

But a gasping "No, no, I have forgotten—I have conquered," was a yet more touching and transparent revelation of the young heart.

"I knew it—I knew it!" he rejoined. "But it matters not. It is but a chord that has been touched only to wake up to another and more sympathetic hand. Irene, dearest, do not fear. I will exact nothing, blame nothing, ask nothing of the past. My whole life shall be devoted to your happiness, even to surround it with a fairy dream. Irene, you are, you must be obedient to the attraction which binds us as by a spell. You will be mine—my very own? Speak! Shall it not be so, my beloved?"

She shivered instinctively.

"It cannot be; I am no wife for any one—the poor blind girl! the helpless burden!" she murmured.

"It might be so with others. Some might think so. To me it is but another charm," he said. "And listen, dearest. It may be that the veil can be lifted—that my beautiful one might once more see the light of day, see the lover who worships her very shadow as his brightest sunshine."

A wild, questioning look came over the sad features.

"No, you do but play with my credulity. It is impossible; I know it. I have heard it again and again from the learned men who have striven their very utmost. Do not torture me with the very whisper of such vain hopes," she went on, half despondently.

"Love can do wonders when skill may fail, my fair Irene," he said, softly. "And I do not speak idle tales when I say I believe such a miracle possible. But I would rather that you should give yourself to me in your present sweet, touching helplessness than with even the certainty of such a cure. I am yours, to do as you list, to obey your slightest wish, spend my whole life at your feet in waiting on your will. Or, Irene, I am a banished exile from your presence for ever. Speak, which is to be my fate?"

He moved slightly as he spoke, as if to illustrate his determination, to demonstrate the reality of his resolve.

She clung instinctively to the hand she still held. A feeling of utter desolation came over her at the idea of such abandonment.

Her father was loving and devoted, but his very sad sympathy with her sorrow was depressing, and Eustace with his music, his magical resources of amusement, his love and youth, was like a flood of spring gladness in her winter gloom.

She could not bear to lose him. Yet there was one secret that in her transparent candour, her maiden truthfulness and delicacy, she must confess.

"Eustace," she murmured, bending forward and hiding her face, as if she could see the eyes that were perusing her confused and blushing features, "listen before I grant what you ask. You said but now I did not understand what love is. Eustace, I do—that is I did once."

His arm was thrown lightly round her, and her slight form drawn within his embrace, while the head drooped helplessly on his shoulder.

"My darling, I guessed it. How could it be otherwise? One so fair must have had a very crowd of lovers. Spare yourself farther pain. Perhaps I can tell the tale. His love did not bear the test of trial and sorrow, and he was faithless. At least I can outvie my rival in true devotion, however unworthy otherwise of my prize. In sorrow, affliction, poverty, Irene would still be my chosen, my beloved, precious bride."

His lips touched her brow, but maybe so lightly that she scarcely knew the caress. But she could not but be conscious of the arms that tightened round her and the low words that breathed passionate thanks and love in her ears as she trembled within his embrace.

Was she happy? It was rather a dream-like intoxication than maiden's joy in a mutual love.

Suddenly she started up as if galvanised from his arms. Her quickened senses had caught the sound of an approaching footstep, and she recoiled even from the presence of her dotting father in that mood of strange emotion.

"Hush, my Irene, there is nothing to fear," said Eustace, firmly. "Sir Hugh," he added, as the baronet approached, "I have won my coveted prize. Will you give it to me as freely as I will receive it gratefully and prize it as a choice jewel?"

Even Eustace's sharp faculties did not perceive that even as he spoke a figure appeared within sight of the half-opened doorway, as if about to follow the baronet into the room. But, though Sir Hugh himself turned round uneasily ere he replied to the eager words, the intruder had vanished and the door was closed in the very twinkling of that rapid glance.

"You are impetuous indeed, my young friend," returned the baronet, with involuntary hesitation in his mien; "I must think, and learn this darling child's wishes ere I can sanction your suit. Irene, my beloved, is it indeed so? Will you be content to yield yourself to the love and care of a stranger, and leave your dotting parent for his sake?"

"No—no. Not leave you, dearest father," she cried, eagerly. "Only, if you are willing, he is so good and kind, and we have been happy since he was with us, and it is very desolate in our loneliness and sorrow, is it not, my father?"

Sir Hugh felt a pang dart like a warning stab through his very bosom as he listened.

But he believed it was but a father's jealous selfishness, and he bore and crushed it bravely back in his very soul.

"I will not, I cannot refuse you anything, my child," he said, tenderly. "And, when I have spoken a few necessary words to your lover, I will give you my answer without keeping you in one minute's needless suspense. Mr. Villiers," he added, with a significant look to the young man, "may I ask you to accompany me to my room? I shall not detain you long."

In a few seconds the strangely assorted pair, so

interested in Irene's future, were alone in the private sitting-room of the baronet.

"Mr. Villiers, you can guess my object," said Sir Hugh, rapidly. "You know the condition on which I granted your suit to my only child, my heiress. That still remains to be fulfilled—Irene is still the afflicted, the suffering one. And you are pledged for her restoration at the price of her dear hand."

Eustace smiled with an air of superior power and wisdom that might well gail the proud spirit of a Delaney.

"Excuse me, Sir Hugh, our compact was this—I was to gain Miss Delaney's heart unconnected with such a bribe. And that is mine, mine past recall. And if even I were to fail in my efforts for her restoration I will still be willing to undertake the precious charge of her helplessness and her sorrow. But it is needless to speak of that," he added, "I for one have no fear of failure. My magic spell shall not lose its power over the eyes as well as the heart of my fair betrothed."

Sir Hugh's brow darkened.

"Mr. Villiers," he said, "I almost shudder at my own tenacity. Pardon me when I remind you how little I really know of you or your antecedents or your character and dispositions. I believe I have done rashly in my despair. There are worse evils even than blindness, and my darling is at least safe in my keeping and in her cherished home and friends."

Eustace Villiers with apparent difficulty repressed a very outbreak of rage that would have boiled like seething lava over Sir Hugh's spirit.

But there was only a stern gravity in his tone as the dark frame relaxed and the livid hue waned in his mobile features and he permitted himself to reply to his companion's doubting words.

"I will hope you are not aware of the insidious power of your daughter's hand prompted you to heap on her future husband," he said. "However, I will not even deign to refute your idle suspicions. It is enough that you have no alternative now—none but to give me your daughter's hand. Your word is pledged, she loves me, freely and spontaneously, without one thought of the boon I can confer. And, mark me, should you be so human, so disconcerted as to retract the pledge you gave, you will reap a bitter retribution. She will pine and fade—ay, sink into the very grave, the victim of a father's folly and deception. Now you understand me you can make your election, Sir Hugh."

The baronet cowered under that basilisk gaze, which seemed to strike a terror where it was fixed with its fierce glitter, though it could melt the very heart when it was softening with liquid light in his moments of playful or loving tenderness.

"You must bear with me," he said, deprecatingly.

"Think what I have at stake, my only, my beautiful child—the heiress of so ancient a line, and you—"

"Have a yet loftier title to deference and respect than a Delaney," interrupted Eustace, laughingly.

"Sir Hugh, this is no idle boasting. I tell you I have blood as noble and power infinitely higher than your dead ancestors, who live in your old vaults with such useless pomp of names and titles. However, all that is nothing. I have fulfilled my pledge thus far. Unaided, unknown, I have obtained your daughter's love, and I demand her as my right, whether I restore her sight or not. Yes, do not hag on that 'if' with any frivolous excuse. Irene will stand at the altar with her bright eyes as free from film and shadow as my own, and my bride will be this twice won with all that is her appanage."

Sir Hugh marked the emphasis on that last word.

"Irene Delaney will be richly dowered without any addition of mine, Mr. Villiers," he said. "And it only depends on my consent being given to her marriage for the fortune that was bequeathed to her by a distant relative to be hers from her wedding-day. But if she is happy—if you prove worthy of her—I shall seek no other heir for all that is alienable from the title and entailed estates. Thus you will indeed have a prize for which a prince might contend—should she become yours," he added, jestingly.

"And I shall give a return that princes could not offer," returned Eustace, laughingly. "Sir Hugh, there has been too much of this. If you have real love for your daughter, or the slightest knowledge of the world, you must comprehend that a blind bride would not be welcome to any man—unless as the adjunct to a bargain. And what would she be then? At the mercy of mercenary harpies and ignorant attendants; Pshaw! it is enough to make a man throw up the whole business in disgust," he added, with a slight movement towards the door.

"Stay, stay, Mr. Villiers; you are too hasty—too impetuous," interrupted Sir Hugh, hastily. "It is but a father's natural jealousy; I would not break my word—no, not for a king. Take her, Mr. Villiers—the dearest treasure, the most priceless jewel

man can bestow or receive, and may Heaven's curse rest on you if you do not value and cherish it as it deserves. My blessed, idolized child—Heaven help me if I am risking her life for one of life's blessings."

It was a strange betrothal. Curses, instead of blessings, on the father's lips, a shadow of resentment on the lover's brow, a suppressed smile of scorn on his lips, instead of the tender joy, the grateful exultation of a newly affianced bridegroom.

And, as if to complete the ominous gloom of the scene, the clouds, which had been rapidly gathering with the quick changes of that Mediterranean sky, were suddenly rent by a peal of thunder that shook even that spacious villa to its very foundations, and with its accompanying blast of forked lightning struck a momentary terror even into those preoccupied masculine hearts.

It was a terrible omen for the betrothal of that fair and gentle heiress.

Was it in warning or in judgment?

CHAPTER VII.

A cloudless sun
Sheds in the breath of love eternal spring.
Could age but keep the joys that youth has won,
The woman's heart would fold its idle wing.
If change there bein Fate and Nature's plan,
Wherefore blame us? It is in Him—not man.

The thunder-storm was raging in the clear atmosphere of that Italian city with an unabated violence. And yet Norma D'Albano was watching it from her high windows, that commanded a full view of the beautiful bay and the fair palaces and streets that formed the nearer neighbourhood of her dwelling.

Her dark eyes were flashing eagerly around in every direction, with an eager regardfulness of the fierce tempest or the danger which she was dreading from the lurid blue that lit up the sky with more than mortal splendour.

Her beautiful, romantic features were flushed with eager expectation, and yet there was a taint in the whole expression of her face and attitude that spoke either of terror or of doubt.

"He comes not—he comes not," she murmured, incessantly. "Yet the hour is far past when he should have been here—long before the storm began. Merciful Heaven!" she ejaculated, "if he should have been hurt—killed! And I, jealous, wicked that I am, and blaming his tardiness. Oh, I shall go mad if this suspense lasts. Yet surely no human being would dare the fury of this tempest, and I dare not tempt his fate by going to his home. Eustace, Eustace, if you did but know the boiling, maddening love of my heart, if you could feel what burns in my breast, you would not torture me even by one moment's agony."

There was a step on the deserted pave beneath, which the lull in the tempest made audible to her sharpened senses.

She leaned forward from within the open *jalousies* and saw a figure rapidly approaching the lofty mansion in which her apartments were situated. It was a man wrapped in a cloak, such as she had often seen Eustace wear, and she forgot in her excitement that it was the usual costume of half the *cavalieri* of Naples. The pedestrian's head was bent forward in natural defence against the fury of the tempest. The height and build of the new comer were well-nigh identical with her beloved.

What wonder if the love-sick watcher believed in the accomplishment of her weakened hope?

Then came steps, quick, bounding, youthful in their sharp rapidity.

She darted to the door of her room, opened its inner door, which was secured against all intrusion from without, and passed into the small vestibule which was the approach to her apartments.

The handle of that little corridor was turned, the door opened, and in the obscure gloom with impetuous eagerness of gesture she rushed forward and sprang into the stranger's violent arms.

She was impulsively, passionately clasped to the muffled form's bosom with a strained and passionate embrace.

For a moment she nestled in those clasping arms. Then she sprang in questioning terror from the caress, and gazed up in the partially revealed features with a sharp, sudden cry.

It was not Eustace Villiers.

Though the face was familiar to her, the disappointment and the shame brought an indignant flush of disdain from her coal-black, blazing eyes.

"Lord Neville!" she exclaimed, with what was in truth the gasping bitterness of disappointment, but which had a Medea-like fierceness in its expression. "This is insolent, unpardonable. Leave me this moment, I entreat you—I insist. How dare you practise such an infamous deception?"

"Pardon me first, Norma," replied the intruder, coolly pursuing his advance. "If there is deception in the case it is rather to expose than to practise it that

I am here. As to going out again to face the pitiless storm, I really cannot display such heroism or such madness."

The girl stood for a moment resolutely in the path of the new comer.

But Lord Neville gently but firmly put her aside and quietly walked into the luxurious apartment which has been already painted to the reader's imagination.

He cast off the wet cloak as coolly as if he were in his own apartment, and, throwing it into a side ante-chamber, closed the door and placed himself on one of the various lounges that were scattered about the room.

Now that the disguising wraps were removed the features and figure of a handsome though rather old Englishman were exposed to full view. Tall, well made, with the Samson type of features, chestnut curling hair, and full gray eyes, Granley Neville had the air of one who was more devoted to pleasure than to serious pursuits, but who would on emergency display the determination and the energy of his race whether for good or ill.

"So the fair deity of song was honouring some favoured rival with anxious watching when I arrived to break the vigil," he said, carelessly tossing an eyeglass to and fro in his fingers.

"I did not expect Lord Neville. That is all you have any right to know," she replied, angrily.

"Don't be snappish, signiorina, though it must be confessed the mood rather suits you," returned the young nobleman, coolly. "You mistake, I assure you, as to the importance of my knowledge. It may give you valuable information as well as amuse myself by the revelation," was the composed remark that accompanied the extinction of a cigar and elaborately carved holder from his pocket.

Norma shrank back with a gesture of disgust. But the young viscount coolly made a tour of inspection round his apartment in search of lights for his Havanna.

"My lord, it is not usual, nor courteous for any gentleman to smoke in my apartments. Your presence is sufficiently disagreeable without any such noxious addition."

"Ah, so Eustace Villiers does not blow clouds here, though it's plain he manages to throw dust in your eyes," he resumed, lightly, managing as he spoke to illumine the fuses with the sole of his boot.

The girl started back involuntarily.

There was something so conjunct and clearly significant in her unwelcome guest's tone and look.

But she did not deign to reply.

She was looking from the window still, in analogy of mingled expectation and alarm, gazing for the advent of him she so passionately loved.

"You need not disturb yourself, my fair hostess," resumed Neville, tauntingly. "Eustace is too well engaged to turn up in the finest sunshine—certainly not in such a tempest as this. I left him but soon in the seventh heaven of bliss."

"You left him!" repeated the girl, with her tongue well nigh cloyed to her mouth. "Then did he—I mean have you a message from him? Why did you not tell me, and I—"

"Would have behaved rather more courteously. Is that what you would say, my signiorina?" interrupted Granley Neville, coolly. "I can well believe it, but I had no such credulity. It was merely that I possessed the knowledge which I have just had the honour to communicate to you, and I thought it a pity you should waste your energies and strain your eyes in vain for the ungrateful traitor."

Norma tried hard to restrain her eager and passionate indignation, but the wild jealousy of her Southern nature could not be so easily crushed back, and she sprang forward from her room, with eyes that flashed like the lightnings which were still parting the black clouds with their lurid flame.

"Lord Neville, if you are a gentleman, if you pay me the respect due to a woman, you will forbear these taunting hints, and explain your meaning. You seem to imply that Mr. Villiers gave you some commission for me. Where was he? and why did he not keep the appointment, he made?"

Granley Neville was not altogether devoid of feeling, or of honour, though he was but a man blessed with pleasure and selfish in his gratification.

"Calm yourself, signiorina," he said, more kindly, and rising respectfully from his chair he threw away the offensive cigar that he had assumed to be a kind of headdress. "I confess I did wrong in thus taunting and taunting you by such vague hints of what I do honestly believe you should know, in justice to yourself. But I fear you cannot hear it," he said as he watched the changing colour, the quivering lips of the beautiful countenance. "You have not strength or patience for the tidings. Would that I could offer comfort, and win for myself the heart so ungratefully rejected."

"Go on—quick, quick! or I shall die!" she exclaimed, stamping her foot impatiently.

Granley saw that she could indeed bear no more suspense and trifling at his hands.

"Signiorina," he said, gently, "it is for you to display a recreant love, as one so beautiful and gifted may well do. The man whom you have, if report speaks true, distinguished by your preference is, at this moment at the feet of another and richer though not fairer love. Eustace Villiers is at the Villa Campana, where Sir Hugh Delancy and his only child are the victims of his arts as much as yourself, if it is true that he is indeed your sworn and favoured admirer."

"And she—what of her? Is she lovely, rich, young?" gasped the girl, with a strange, hoarse voice.

"Lovely—well, in a fair, impudic style—yes," was the reply: "rich—most undoubtedly—and young. It is a brilliant match, a tempting prize for any man, it must be confessed."

There was a tempest in that small frame, a horror, a stunning bewilderment that fairly perplexed even Lord Villiers, varied as he was in women's wiles and women's passions.

"It is false! he dare not, he cannot," came in slow, deep accents from the very inner recesses of her bosom.

And Granley barely caught the slight form in his arms as it staggered and well nigh fell to the ground in a half-merciful, though not entire unconsciousness of her misery.

The young man gazed in an almost, comical perplexity on the pale figure that lay in his arms with such touching abandonment of love; and, to do him justice, he did not attempt to take advantage of that partial insensibility to even touch the fair brow or full lips of that lovely sufferer.

He bore her to a couch, and, laying her gently on the pillows, went to the door of the apartment, in a vague hope to find some servant or others who might come to his aid in the perplexity of Norma's unconscious swoon.

But the opposite rooms in the suite were apparently empty, the attendants having perhaps fled in terror at the storm to seek society below, and Granley was about to return into the saloon with a desperate attempt at bringing back the patient himself to consciousness, when steps were heard on the stairs, and ere he was exactly realizing the peculiarity of the position in which he was found the quick bound of a masculine foot came to the very door.

It was thrown open with a firm, familiar hand, and the next moment Eustace Villiers and the young viscount stood gazing face to face in a fierce and astonished gaze.

"You here, my lord!—and Norma! What is all this?" came from Eustace, with a cool bitterness of scorn. "Is this an arranged scene, or what does it imply? Perhaps that I am *de trop*," he went on, with a low bow to Granley, whose face was flushed hotly with the embarrassing encounter.

But before he could reply Norma, roused from her insensibility by the familiar voice, started from her couch and placed herself between them.

"Lord Villiers, leave me this moment," she gasped.

"I must be alone with this gentleman."

But Eustace did not seem to notice the interference save by a perceptible waver of his hand, that put the slightest force aside.

"I shall be happy to give place to you, my lord, when we fully understand each other," he said, tauntingly. "But perhaps one explanation had better be in another place and when we are less embarrassed by witnesses. For the present it may be as well if you leave this lady to repose, in the apparent state of her health and nerves."

He pointed to the door as he spoke, and though Granley's pride rose at the cool insolence of the gesture he yet had a sort of consciousness that made him shrink from the impending crisis.

"You will find me whenever it suits you, Mr. Villiers," he said, coldly. "And, rely on it, when I hear from you I shall be perfectly ready to meet you at any time and place. Signiorina, I will relieve you of my presence," he said, bowing to the white and bewildered girl, "and I shall trust to find your health restored before I see you again."

And, with a slight, baughty inclination of the head to Eustace, the young nobleman quitted the room.

For a brief moment the pair, he had left regarded each other in silence.

Norma, sunk on the couch, from which she had started in an involuntary terror at the dark, frowning brow which Eustace leered on her, and the reproaches she had on her lips were fixed, as it were, to her tongue.

He was the first to speak.

"Norma, what means this?" he said, sternly. "How was it that I find you alone with the most confirmed rout in Naples, and in an agitation that made you faint at my approach?" he added, bitterly.

Perhaps the reproach gave the girl courage. She sprang forward and stood haughtily before him.

"Eustace, how dare you?" she exclaimed, fiercely.

"How dare you cast a slur on the honour of your wife? and how dare you, villain that you must be, betray me—ay, and dare to offer homage to another?" He laughed scornfully.

"And pray who told you this absurd falsehood?" he asked. "Did that rascally lordling who has just sneaked from the room dare to meddle with my affairs and retail slander? He had better not."

"Eustace, peace," she said, sternly. "peace. I can see the truth in your face, your tone, in the strange alteration in your manner of late. Eustace, I believe what I have heard, I believe that you are guilty."

"Indeed, and of what?" he asked, contemptuously.

"Of treachery and baseness to me and to another, Eustace, which shall not go unpunished," she exclaimed, passionately. "Yes, it is explained now—your frequent absence, your neglect, the change in manner—it is that you have been at the feet of another—of Miss Delancy—that you have dared to speak love to her, to let it be supposed that you can marry her. But you cannot, you dare not," she added, in a passion of rage and jealousy, that lashed itself up to the very agony of emotion. "I or you should die ere such villainy could be practised."

Eustace looked half scornfully, half admiringly at her. She was indeed brilliant in her very frenzy of feeling, such as would have brought down a very ovation of overpowering enthusiasm on the stage, so terrible was its intensity.

Her dark eyes shone, her vermillion bloom was deepened to a glowing flame, that made her loveliness absolutely dazzling in its blaze.

"Come, come, Norma, you are really dabbling yourself to give way to such jealous nonsense," said Eustace, after a slight pause, in which he seemed as it were uncertain in his course. "Now sit down and calm yourself, and tell me what all this folly means," and he tried to take her hand and lead her to a seat; but she snatched it from his touch.

"No—no," she exclaimed, shivering under his contact. "You have just come from her—her—your hand has been caressing hers; base that you are, I will not be polluted by such a touch."

He laughed scornfully.

"Pshaw! Norma, leave this tragedy airs for the stage, and talk common sense. If you really mean that you believe there is any such understanding as you allude to between Irene Delancy and myself, you are simply an idiot and deserve to suffer for your folly," he added, impatiently. "You may thank my forbearance if I do not make you pay dearly for all this bombast and rant."

She was somewhat cowed, perhaps, but still the instinct of truth was too strong within her for his success.

"Eustace, you cannot deprive it even while you condemn me," she said. "Can you tell me that you have not been lingering at her side, drinking in her beauty, craving her wealth, and only desiring you were free to win what you desired and coveted?"

"Norma! this almost passes patience," he said. "Pray did the doughty knight who gave you this precious news add to it what I once before told you that Irene Delancy is blind—a unhappy, afflicted, blind girl, who is to be pitied, not envied, in her wealth and rank?"

She looked doubtfully at him.

"Eustace, is it so? Can I credit it?"

"Believe you would give a man's word," he replied, hastily. "I tell you all Naples would confirm my words. And if you choose to doubt them you can have the truth tested at your next performance, perhaps, when the fair, unhappy girl will most probably come on stage to enjoy your voice as her chief solace."

She gazed eagerly, passionately at him, as if to drink in the solace his words conveyed.

But he turned impatiently away.

He saw the impression he had made, and had sufficient tact and power to take advantage of it.

"Eustace," she said, timidly, "Eustace."

No reply was vouchsafed, but his head was still averted from her gaze.

She came to his side, her hands were laid gently, timidly on his, but he snatched them away from her touch.

"Eustace, dearest, forgive me," she said, kneeling before him in the passionate humility of her utter abandonment to her love. "It was that I could not endure to live without you, to even think of you as at another's feet, or gazing in another's features with one look of love such as you give to me. Oh, Eustace, do not turn from me," she said, humbly kissing the hand she had taken. "Think how terrible it is for me to be here in loneliness, exposed to taunts and insults, because it is not known that I am a wedded wife. Then, when such fearful slanders are brought to me, is it wonder that they would drive me nearly mad, Eustace, so that I am not master of myself? Have pity, for you are my all, my very world, Eustace," she went on, seeing that his averted head was not turned towards her, and that

the hands were firmly folded from her frantic touch. "You are the sole object in the applause I gain, in the beauty I adorn. It is you, only for you I crave the triumphs, Eustace. Will you not pardon what is but the excess of love?"

His hand was slowly relaxed to permit the pressure of hers.

"What of the suspicious position in which I discovered you, Norma?" he said, more gently.

"Eustace, you knew it was but an unfortunate and most innocent catastrophe on my part," she said. "As to that meddling coxcomb, I hate him, for he slandered you, my beloved, my idol, my—husband." She sprang into his arms, and nestled to his bosom like a wounded fawn.

He—even he—could not resist the passionate devotion that moulded her to his will, the beauty that might well compete even with the pale, pure charms of Irene Delancy.

"Be content, he shall not trouble you again, my petite," he said, kissing her upturned brow.

Norma tasted a few brief moments of reconciliations and trust and love.

It was but a reprieve from pain and torture.

(To be continued.)

BOTHERS.

MEN are bothers. Women were born to be anxious about them. "Life, without any men in it, would be such a calm that possibly nobody would want to go to heaven."

To be sure, without men, nothing would ever have been invented, except dresses. There would be no steam engines, nor any big buildings, or bridges. We should still hammer our corn out between two cold stones, and bake it between two hot ones; but, on the other hand, we should very seldom have the fidgets; we should know about what was going to turn up next, and not feel anxious.

Men stay out latest night without any good reason. Many a woman has begun sitting up to let her father in, gone on with her brothers, continued with her husband, proceeded with her son, and wound up with her grandson, until sitting up for folks became chronic, and if ever her ghost appears it will be with its night-cap on, in the attitude of listening for somebody.

Men go out in boats upon the water, and in ships upon the sea; women stay at home and read the awful accidents. And when Tom and his friends, out in a yacht, are becalmed and have to "stay out" all night, Tom wonders that Susan is "almost dead with worry."

If anybody ever names a boat after me, I hope he will call it the "Anxious Polly," for, oh! how I have peeped out of upper windows, in the moonlight, watching for folks who were enjoying themselves mightily upon the river, and making sure they were all drowned.

Who forgets to write home for a week or two? Man.

Who goes off in the morning with ammunition and fire-arms, and a friend who is going to try to learn to shoot that day? Man.

Who takes pains to get himself into danger, and wonders why women will fidget so? Man.

Who worries about him? Woman.

It is well known that a boy baby cuts his teeth harder, is in danger of death oftener, and is far more trouble "to raise," than a girl. That what with a strong will, and a fondness to climb to high places, born in the child, the woman who keeps her little boy from breaking his bones is a marvel. And, on the whole, I don't know but I should side with the Woman's Rights folks if they would only change their form of words and say, instead of "Man is a tyrant," "Man is a bother."

He certainly is if you care anything about him, and, altogether, it is rather a thankless task to love him much, as a general thing; and at the close of life old Granny Grey may lie down with the remark:

"I've worried about a number of men folks in my life, and I've cooked for a good many too, and I don't know as I've ever had any thanks for it."

As for the other world, I believe angels are neither men nor women, and I'm very glad to believe it too; else would there be some gentleman angel for whom I should be predestined to sit up late always.

M. K. D.

ELDEST SONS OF PEERS.—The following eldest sons of peers attain their majority during the present year:—Earl de Grey, eldest son of the Marquis of Ripon, Jan. 29; Lord Kilmarnock, eldest son of the Earl of Erroll, Feb. 7; Marquis of Tavistock, eldest son of the Duke of Bedford, April 16; Viscount Grimston, eldest son of the Earl of Verulam, May 11; Viscount Seaham, eldest son of Earl Vane, July 17; Viscount Helmsley, eldest son of the Earl of Feversham, August 1; Hon. John George Barry Bing-

ham, eldest son of Lord Clanmorris, August 27; Lord Iverurie, eldest son of the Earl of Kintore, August 12; Hon. Cornwallis Fleeming, eldest son of the Viscount Hawarden, October 22; Lord Cochrane, eldest son of the Earl of Dundonald, October 29; Viscount Maidstone, eldest son of the Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham, December 28.

CAMDEN HOUSE.—It is sixty years ago—namely, in 1813—that Camden House, Chislehurst, was the scene of the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Bonar by Philip Nicholson, a footman in their service. Mrs. Bonar was not, like her husband, killed instantaneously, but when the maid-servant entered the room where the tragedy occurred in the morning, to call her master and mistress, the unfortunate lady was still alive, and, there being no telegraphic communication in those days between Chislehurst and London, servants were sent post haste to the metropolis to procure the services of an eminent surgeon. Mr. Astley Cooper travelled to the spot as fast as possible, but arrived too late to be of any use. Mrs. Bonar's head had been fractured by a blow inflicted with a poker; the wound was mortal, and she died in the afternoon of the same day, remaining insensible to the last.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURE.

DARLING girls, with glad, pure music
Ringing yet in each young heart,
Store and love most household treasure,
Precious through life's future part,
When you'll too, as sacred mothers,
Bravely boyed and gently girl'd,
Feel the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rocks the world.

Oh, that such true preparation
For all infancy was wrought!
Oh, how sooner would truth, justice,
By the Manger's Star be brought!
Yet they are on earth advancing;
Farther from it wrong is hurled,
While the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rocks the world.

Lower Wrong of every feature
Trembles down, and towers Right;
More and more, with arm supernal,
Proving love's eternal might;
For maternal preparation
Grows, spite of all false creeds hurled,
While the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rocks the world.

Darling girls, with household knowledge
Other should be won and nursed,
But the very lips of Heaven
Ceaseless whisper, "Home's is first."
"Home's?" you answer, so you will when,
Bravely boyed and gently girl'd,
Feeling hands that rock the cradle
Are the hands that rock the world.

W. B. W.

SCIENCE.

COOLING WATER BELOW THE FREEZING POINT.

—A glass tube closed at one end and blown to a bulb near the upper end, and the upper limb bent and drawn to a point, is filled to the middle of the bulb with distilled water that has been boiled. The water is heated to drive the air out of the tube, and the tube is sealed by the blowpipe. Another tube of the same form, but not bent and drawn to a point, is filled with water that has not been boiled, and hence contains air. The two are now placed in a freezing mixture, and after the water in the open tube has frozen the other will be found to be still liquid. On taking it out of the freezing mixture and shaking, it will instantly congeal.

MILITARY BREECH-LOADERS.—The following general rules will aid the Council of the National Rifle Association in deciding as to what constitutes military breech-loaders:—1. Weight not to exceed without bayonet, 9 lb. 8 oz. for .577 bore; weight not to exceed without bayonet, 9 lb. 4 oz. for .45 in. bore, the barrel, being 39 in. and 33.25 in. long respectively. 2. Length from 48 in. to 55 in. measured from the muzzle to the butt when placed on the ground. 3. Stock—sufficiently strong and such as to carry a light metal cleaning rod and to allow a sling to be used. 4. Minimum pull of trigger 6 lb. 5. All breech-loading rifles must have proof marks, both on barrel and breech arrangements, and the competitor must produce a statement from the owner of the rifle that the cartridge used is on the same principle as that with which the rifle was proved. 6. Military sights. (a) Foresights: 1. The foresight to be such as to admit of a regulation bayonet or sword being fixed. 2. The form known as "barley corn" as common to military rifles. (b) Backsight: 1. To be attached to the barrel in front of the lock. 2. No transverse adjustment or any other moveable adjustment except a hinged flap and a sliding bar, to be moved by hand only, without

screws, racks, or any other mechanical appliances. 3. Graduations on flap only are used in military rifles. 4. The sliding bar to be with or without vertical lines, and the upper edge either straight or with a V of angles, similar to those of the service arms. The outside measurement of the part on which the flap of leaf rests must not exceed one inch.

SUBSTITUTE FOR WALL PAPER.—Considerable progress has been made in the production of a substitute for paper that would be a boon to hospitals as well as private houses. The new-wall decorations to supersede paper-hangings and paint are thin sheets of metal painted over by a patented process. They are artistic in appearance, like most French products, and said to be durable. Tinfoil in sheets, the thickness of ordinary writing-paper, is the material on which this new style of mural decoration, including gilding, is executed. Tinfoil is pliable and supple, sufficiently tough not to be easily torn, and offers a smooth and uniform surface. It forms an excellent base for the work executed upon it. It also possesses the advantage of being waterproof, a property well known to architects and builders, who frequently use it to cover damp walls, on which, without that covering, any decorative work would soon perish. The process of executing the painting on tin offers no difficulty. The sheets are manufactured of a width and in lengths suitable to their application on the surfaces to be covered. At the manufactory in Paris the ordinary widths made use of are from 30 to 40 inches, and the length five metres, or rather more than five yards. The application of the painted metallic hangings to either wood, stone, plaster, or iron surfaces offers no difficulty. The operation is somewhat similar to putting up paper-hangings, with this difference—that with the latter the paper is pasted over at the back before being hung, and with the former the surface to be decorated is covered with a thin coat of adhesive varnish, on which, after it has been left to dry partially, the painted tin is affixed with great ease. So little is the difficulty that any skilled paper-hanger can, after a few hours' practice, do the work successfully. From the extreme flexibility of tinfoil, mouldings and cornices are covered with the metallic hangings in the most perfect manner, and with a smoothness of surface and sharpness of outline at the edge and mitres which the painter's brush cannot rival. The varnish used for fixing the material is of the nature of gold size, but more adhesive. Being of itself "hydrofuge," it adds to the protection of the paint against damp. If all this is true, we may well wish the patentees success.

STRANGE STORY OF A MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN.—It has been a subject of surprise to many that Captain Stewart, who is considered one of the most experienced and careful sailors in the Pacific Company's service, should have been so convinced that he was several miles from land just before the "Tacora" ran on Cape St. Mary and became a wreck. There is, however, an extraordinary revelation by Mr. James Oliver, of Fray Bentos, which goes far towards explaining the cause of the wreck of the steamer in question. Mr. Oliver states that in the year 1848 the schooner "Miltiades," of Monte Video, was fishing for seals between Lobos Island and Castillos. On the evening in question, about four o'clock, it fell quite calm, with no current either up or down, the vessel lying in 19 fathoms of water, and about five miles from the shore. "At eight p.m.," says Mr. Oliver, "on going on deck, the moon being nearly full, and a bright moonlight night, I thought we were much nearer the shore, and on heaving the lead I found the same depth of water. I soon, however, perceived that, although there was no current, the vessel was drifting towards the shore about a mile an hour. Calling my comrades, I succeeded, by means of oars, in turning the bow of the vessel again seawards, but several times it swerved again round towards land. I was unwilling to cast anchor in such deep water, and kept the lead going while the vessel drifted towards the shore; till, luckily, a light breeze sprang up from the land, and carried us out to sea. If it had been a dark night, we should probably have been driven ashore in another hour, perfectly ignorant of our danger of the mysterious power that wafted us without any current landwards. The occurrence impressed me so much that, on my return to Monte Video, I reported it to the Topographic Board, but no notice was paid to it. Subsequently, in 1857, Mr. W. Hammett, who had been on the topographic committee, informed me that magnetic stones were found in the Sierra de Animas running northward from Monte Video; and this at once appeared to me an explanation of the mystery. In 1866 I wrote to the British admiral on the station on this subject, but perhaps my letter did not reach him. In later times I wrote to Professor Agassiz, but with no better success. Now that the 'Tacora' wreck revives interest in this question, I think it right to give the above statement of facts that I leave scientific men to decide upon."



THE GOLDEN LURE.

CHAPTER III.

Tidings do I bring of lucky joys
And golden times and happy news of price.

Shakespeare.

DURING her residence at Sandhill House Jane became a new creature. The flush of health returned to her thin cheeks and the charm of youth pervaded body and spirit.

The old bachelor watched her curiously. "A woman is a singular creature," he thought, noting the added bloom and the sparkling, vivacious mood of his youthful housekeeper. "Upon the whole, it's rather pleasant to have one in the house. I'll see that she don't go away very soon."

The life at Sandhill was very pleasant. The surgeon gradually withdrew from his reserve with his fellow mortals outside the pale of his beloved profession, and mingled more with the world. Twice he gave a select little party, and Jane became acquainted with a number of the neighbouring people.

So things went on for nearly a year, then something happened that caused the surgeon to look grave.

By accident he discovered Brownell's advertisement. An undefinable suspicion took possession of his mind. Jane noticed his altered demeanour, and felt both wounded and angry.

"What have I done," she asked, bitterly, "that he should look upon me with so much suspicion as he evidently does?"

Evlin despatched a letter to Adam Brownell, and then waited patiently for a reply.

In the meantime Jane was deprived of her household duties, and, unknown to herself, there came one day to Sandhill an old lady in faded black, who by the authority of Evlin took charge of the keys and assumed the control of the house.

Jane wept woefully when this happened.

"I am no longer useful," she thought, "and I am reminded in this way that I am not wanted."

Things stood thus when Evlin received his reply.

He called Jane into the library on the evening of its receipt.

"I desire to speak with you on a little private matter, Miss Brent," he said as Jane came in.

She had been expecting it, and steeled herself to bear the worst.

"I have long known that the time had nearly come when my services would be dispensed with, and I would say now that I thank you sincerely for all you have done, and will go immediately," she burst forth, striving to control her unsteady tones.

Evlin looked up in astonishment.

[A HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS.]

"Why, Miss Brent, I cannot imagine what you mean," said he, in surprise. "I did not call you in here to receive your 'discharge,' as you seem to think; but to tell you of a great fortune that has come to you."

It was now Jane's turn to be astonished.

"Will you kindly explain?" she asked.

He took the lawyer's letter from his pocket, with a copy of a newspaper, showing her first the advertisement. Brownell's letter read as follows:

October 20th, 18—.

"EDWARD EVLIN, Esq.,—Dear Sir,—Yours of the 1st was duly received and its contents noted. I was surprised at the information it contained, but sincerely rejoice to learn that the long-sought heir of Marshmellow is found at last. The legacy is a very valuable one, consisting of the old manor house and a hundred thousand pounds in bank. Agreeably to the directions in the will of the deceased John Marsh, the rents and interest money are being collected this year for the first time by Ernest Ingersol, who if the rightful heir failed to make his or her appearance was to inherit the above-mentioned estate and bank account. The young lady has only to come forward, prove her right, and establish herself at the Hall."

"I would advise her to make no delay whatever in presenting her claims. In the meantime, hoping to hear from you immediately, I remain,

Yours respectfully,

"ADAM BROWNELL, Attorney."

Jane quivered like an aspen leaf.

"A hundred thousand pounds!" she ejaculated.

"What shall I do with such a sum?"

Evlin smiled.

"What a natural question you ask. A woman's first idea is to get rid of what she has, and—"

"Inveigle somebody into giving her something more," interrupted the girl, with a saucy shrug of her shoulders.

"I was not going to make so rude a speech as that, Miss Brent, but since you have finished the sentence to your liking you may let it stand as it is," he retorted. "But to business, young lady. You have to prove that you are the veritable 'Jane Brent' before you inherit all those numerous pounds the lawyer mentions in his letter, and now pray tell me can you do it?"

"A very easy matter, sir, as I will show you," said she, leaving the room.

Presently she returned, carrying in her hands the little brass-bound ebony box, which she set on the table, and, unlatching it, took out some yellow, worn papers, which she showed then to the surgeon.

They proved to be the marriage certificate of her parents and a record of her birth and baptism.

Then there were letters from John Marsh, written to his sister Jane, while she was yet in school—several more of a later date, when he was making a foreign tour, and various mementoes and keepsakes which the dead woman had retained in memory of her only relative, cherishing them with a jealous care, little thinking of the service they would some day be to her daughter.

"I don't apprehend any difficulty in establishing my identity," said she, refolding them and locking them up again. "I imagine it will be easy enough with these things."

"And when will you start?" asked Evlin, in a constrained tone.

"To-night, can't I?"

Jane smoothed her hair, and settled the knot of ribbon at her throat with a little jerk.

"To-night? Of course not. You must prepare yourself with an escort first. I could not think of your going alone. Some scoundrel would surely swindle you out of your ebony box and birth-right too."

Jane pondered over the matter.

"No, I cannot go alone. But I do not know any one whom I could rely upon that I could get to accompany me."

Evlin walked slowly down the room.

"No, Jane Brent," he said, impressively, "you are alone and friendless, but"—he paused near her chair—"do not alarm yourself unnecessarily about your journey; I will see that you are provided for."

"You are very good. I hardly know how your many kindnesses will ever be repaid."

"Nonsense! Think no more after that fashion, I implore you. If there is any one thing I detest more than another it is to be thanked for some act or word I may have done or said. A good deed brings its own reward, my young friend, remember that. If I choose to make other people glad occasionally, don't I have the pleasure of thinking the matter over and taking all the credit to myself?"

Evlin's voice sounded very gruff and queer, and she strained her eyes in the dim twilight trying to peer into his countenance.

But it was as hard and expressionless as the face of an Egyptian sphinx, and she gave up trying to study his eccentric moods and turned her thoughts to her new-found treasure.

"It is a great deal of money," she mused. "I shall hardly know what to do with myself when I get it."

Then she thought of the quiet life at Sandhill—that would be done away with for ever, for Marsh

mellow Hall and the bank account were a long way removed from her present home.

There was a class of little folks in the Sabbath school at the chapel that she would never teach again, and the boys in the ragged school she had prided herself so much upon would have to be resigned into the care of another.

And her usual round to the poor of the neighbourhood, where she distributed the greater part of the salary the surgeon allowed her, she would miss when she took up the new life that was waiting for her beyond the sea.

A feeling of regret and homesickness took possession of her soul.

"I've a notion not to go," said she, a soft sigh fluttering from her lips; "but let Ingersol have it all and stay where I am."

"A most unwise conclusion, young lady, and one that will not be allowed," said Evelyn's deep voice from behind the heavy curtains. "I have already made preparations for your journey and you will go to-morrow."

Jane started suddenly.

"So soon?" cried she, in terror.

"Yes, some friends of mine are going to Liverpool, and they will see you safely there. And I have found some one to conduct you thence straight to the lawyer."

"And I shall never come here again or see you more," she said as she bowed her head and wept.

The surgeon walked across the floor, and stood beside her chair.

"Jane Brent, the heiress of a hundred thousand pounds has no one to please but herself, and if at any time you choose to return to this old house at Sandhill you will be welcome—more welcome than you can ever know," and he paused for a moment. "Or if you ever really need me in any way do not fail to let me know it, and I will come at your call."

"I will," said she, solemnly. "I surely will."

CHAPTER IV.

False face must hide what the false heart doth know. *Shakespeare.*

TIME passed and nothing was heard of Miss Brent. Ingersol gradually dropped his fears concerning her appearance, and assumed the control of the old manor house.

Two years and more had elapsed, and the rent-rolls were at his command, and the young man began renovating the interior of the Hall. It was now papered, plastered, and painted. Elegant furniture replaced the time-worn, dingy things that had served Marsh for so many years, and statuary and pictures gleamed throughout the rooms in beauty and profusion. Old servants were discharged, and more active ones took their places.

Ernest Ingersol was looked upon with no little respect by his neighbours, and many a fair belle would have gladly become the mistress of Marshmellow as he asked.

It was a glorious October day. The sun shone brightly over the quiet meadows, and the uplands lay bathed in a sea of yellow splendour. The leaves, turning to crimson and gold, fell in rustling showers as the light breeze swayed through the branches.

Ingersol paced slowly up and down the stone terrace. He viewed the luxuriant gardens and spreading fields with an exultant eye.

"All these broad acres will yet be mine," he said to himself. "They are mine now; for I believe that no one will ever step in between the Marshmellow lands and me. I am monarch of all I survey," in truth. After all my years of patient waiting, after all my plans—after that one—"

He stopped, a strange pallor overspreading his sun-lit face.

"I will not think of it," he muttered. "No one knows but me. I will not betray myself now, and the old man rests well in his stone coffin. What matters it if he did go to his long sleep a little sooner than he would if—ah! if what?"

He laughed cruelly.

A low, open carriage was being driven slowly up the road. He noted the easy stride of the single horse before it a little curiously.

"Company," muttered he. "I wonder who it can be."

He paced to and fro upon the terrace, listlessly watching its approach.

"There's something familiar about it," he thought, stopping abruptly and scanning its only occupant—a man in a light gray suit, with a high-crowned hat and gold-rimmed spectacles. "It is Adam Brownell! What is up, I wonder?"

The lawyer rode on through the gates and came up the level drive; then, flinging the reins to the stable boy, he entered the walk and joined Ingersol on the terrace.

"Good-evening, sir."

Ingersol bowed politely and extended his hand.

"Very happy to meet you, Mr. Brownell," said he, ushering him into the house. "But I cannot imagine to what I am indebted for the pleasure of your company this afternoon."

Brownell took the proffered seat.

"Business, Mr. Ingersol," smiled the lawyer.

Ingersol's heart quaked with a sudden fear.

"Excuse me a moment, and I will order a lunch," he replied as he turned to the door.

The attorney shook his head in the negative.

"Really, it is not worth while. I have only a moment to stay; and, in fact, I require nothing at present. Please remain."

Something in his countenance bade Ingersol prepare for bad news; but he was one of those men who put a bold front on and jeer even in the face of adverse fate.

"I know of nothing in the business line that connects your interests and mine," he said, with a shrug.

"Perhaps not," replied the lawyer, absently.

Ernest took a turn across the floor. A new idea struck him.

"You surely haven't come to tell me that the bank has broken, and some defaulting cashier absconded with the hundred thousand pounds?" said he in a cold and haughty tone.

The lawyer rubbed his hands softly together.

"No, Mr. Ingersol, the hundred thousand pounds are safe. Marshmellow Hall is blooming like a garden, and the rents and interests have all been collected and paid to you. I did not come to see you because of any of the above-mentioned articles. I came to tell you—"

He paused, an ineffable look of triumph beaming in his countenance.

"I have come to tell you that I have found the heiress of Marshmellow."

Had a powder-mine exploded at his feet Ingersol could not have been more astonished.

His face became deadly pale, his knees shook under him, and dark circles appeared around his eyes.

"Found Jane Brent?" he gasped.

The lawyer drew Evelyn's letter from his leather case, and handed it to Ingersol.

His eager eyes devoured its contents with a glance.

"True," he whispered, in an unsteady voice. "We may expect her at any time."

Drops of perspiration stood thickly over his forehead, and his tongue seemed parched with heat.

The lawyer pined his emotion.

"I am sorry for you, Ingersol. It's a pity you should lose this fine old estate now that you have laboured and expended so much to make it so beautiful. I almost wish Miss Brent had remained in the background for a while yet."

Ingersol waved his hand.

"Don't, I beg of you. If Miss Brent has really come, then Miss Brent must have her own, that's all. But she must prove herself to be all she claims she is," said Ernest, in a dry, hard voice.

Brownell looked covertly at the young man from the corner of his eye; something in the voice made him suspicious.

"She says she has the certificate of her birth and baptism, also of the marriage of her parents. Moreover, as Mrs. Brent was wedded in the old town below, it will be an easy matter—a very easy matter—for her to prove herself the heiress."

"Oh, yes, I haven't a doubt."

Ingersol seemed to recover himself; his colour came back to his face and strength returned to his limbs.

The hundred thousand pounds, though in danger, were not wholly lost to him yet.

He would not give up all for lost, but battle bravely for what might ultimately become his own.

Jane Brent had not yet come. That much was certain.

If she failed to make her appearance the hundred thousand pounds were his.

The thought gave him energy. Better to fight and lose than to have to know that if he had but managed rightly the princely fortune would not have been lost to him at all.

The lawyer was looking him sharply in the face. It would not do to allow him to read his thoughts too closely.

Ingersol gazed for a few moments from the open window.

When at last he turned to his companion all evidence of his late agitation had disappeared, and he seemed perfectly calm.

"We cannot always have things as we would like them, Mr. Brownell," he said, quietly. "It is true that I have hoped to inherit this great fortune eventually. Unconsciously I have reared many a glittering castle, whose shining walls are now a shattered ruin. Nobody likes to see the hopes and expectations of months destroyed with one blow as mine are now. But I'll endeavour to bear my misfortune like

a man, thinking that what is my loss is some one else's gain."

"Well said," cried Brownell, his suspicion completely overcome by Ingersol's words and manner. "I honour you more than I can express for the manner in which you sustain your misfortune. There are few who could tolerate the idea of losing that vast legacy without emotion. I could not, were I in your place—and I think you are a brave man, sir."

A queer, inexplicable look shot over Ingersol's face.

"Thank you, Mr. Brownell, for your good opinion, but I profess to be no better than other men, and surely there is no bravery displayed in bearing calmly the supposed loss of something I have never owned. But you have not yet told me when the lady is to be expected, or do you not know yourself? I must find out so that I may prepare for her suitable welcome."

Ingersol looked steadily from the window, and the lawyer could not see his face, but his voice was clear and distinct.

"I have written to her to come here immediately, and would not be surprised if she were here in a week. A hundred thousand pounds are a vast amount of money, and most women would be very eager to put their hands on it. I will notify it to you as soon as I hear from her, so that you can have everything in readiness to receive her."

The lawyer rose, shook hands with his host, and getting into his carriage rode away.

Ingersol stood for a time gazing from the open window; then, flinging open the door, he went out on the terrace and passed down the acacia walk, his head bowed upon his breast, his hands folded mechanically behind him, and his thoughts lost in perfecting his new scheme.

He walked late.

The stars illuminated the blue vault of heaven, and the late moon peeped over the far-off hillside ere he went in.

The salt sea winds blow chillily over the moorland, and, mingling with the damp night air, pierced him coldly; but he heeded them not, muttering between his set teeth:

"The hundred thousand pounds shall yet be mine!"

CHAPTER V.

See! in confluence borne before the blast,
Clouds roll'd on clouds, the dark'ning ocean's crest:
The blackening ocean curls, the winds arise,
And the dark'ning in swift succession flies. *Falconer.*

ON a day in November Adam Brownell, in his law office at Chancery, received a short despatch, apprising him of the coming of Jane Brent. The young lady would stop for a few days at Liverpool, and the barrister was requested to meet her there, and conduct her in safety to her destined home.

She had taken passage in the "Mare Fly," a swift-sailing passenger ship, and was on her way outward bound.

The lawyer sent a note, containing the message, to Ingersol, bidding him make his preparations accordingly, and then waited for the time when the vessel was due.

From the shining deck Jane watched the mighty sea of troubled waters around her.

A very fleshy man stood leaning against the railing watching her.

"You were never on the water before, were you, miss?"

His voice was very respectful, and he raised his hat as he asked the question.

"Yes, sir," said Jane, half frightened, and retreating toward her apartment, which she hastily entered, and closed the door.

Finally she emerged again, and in company with one of the ladies of shapely look a quick promenade on deck.

She had not made more than three turns when she saw him again, seemingly bigger and fatter than before.

This time he came directly toward her, holding in his extended hand a lady's pocket-handkerchief.

"Miss Brent," said he, in a perfectly distinct and singularly familiar tone, "allow me to remind this article. You dropped it a short time ago."

She took the proffered hand of lace and muslin bowing her thanks, all the time wondering how in the world the creature knew her name, and whence she had ever known him.

She was not sea sick, like many of the passengers, and while they lay in their respective berths she strolled upon the deck, and amused herself for hours with looking out over the vast expanse of waters.

The fat man was always near her.

Though he never intended, yet whenever she went he followed—if she dropped an article he was the one to get it, and when she would converse he was lively, sociable and highly entertaining.

He was well acquainted with the places where she had lived, knew people who were her friends, and professed to be on most intimate terms with Dr. Evelyn.

"Singular creature," thought Jane; "I wonder who you are, and where you came from."

She both liked and disliked him.

If she remained out too long in the evening, it, he immediately ordered her off to her cabin.

If she dared go on deck early in the morning, the first person she saw was the fat man, who promptly told her to keep in her cabin till the sun was higher, or else to wrap up better.

If she ate less than usual, he would hastily march up to her, seize her most unceremoniously by the wrist, and in a loud tone count her pulse and order various medicines. Jane almost hated him then.

At other times he would read to her from his books—and he seemed to have an inexhaustible stock of them; or in that strangely familiar voice of his he would describe different foreign cities and remote places with a power and charm of manner altogether irresistible.

At such times she enjoyed his company very much, and thought with a vague feeling of regret of the approaching time when a relentless fate would divide their paths, and she would continue on her strange and perilous journey alone.

Days passed. The vessel sailed steadily onward, and the captain declared that another thirty-six hours would bring them to their destination.

Jane sat on deck, watching the twilight gather over the restless waters.

The sun had set behind a pile of leaden clouds, and the wind was rising and sighed ominously through the tall spars.

A flock of screaming sea birds swept and circled round the ship, and she noted listlessly their low poise as they soared overhead.

The skies grew blacker and blacker, the waves ran high, and the white spray dashed angrily over the deck.

"You must go to your cabin, Miss Brent," said a quiet voice at her side. "We are going to have a storm, and this is no place for you."

The fat man was standing imperturbably near her, his hands crossed, and his eyes looking seaward.

"A storm!" she shuddered, with a sense of approaching danger, and drew her scarlet shawl more closely over her shoulders.

"Yes, a storm! and, if I am anything of a judge, it will be a severe one too."

Even as he spoke a sudden flash shot athwart the sky, and a heavy peal of thunder came booming over the waters.

"You are right," she said, slowly. "I will go below."

She arose from her seat, but the rolling and pitching of the vessel were so great that she grasped the rail for support.

The fat man sprang to her assistance.

"Let me help you."

He almost carried her to her room, relinquishing her hand with a gentle but very perceptible pressure.

"The monster!" cried she as the door closed and the hot, indignant blood surged over her face and neck; "I will never speak to him again. I am vexed—nay, mad!"—and she tried to make herself believe it was so.

But as the night came on, and the storm grew worse, she forgot her wrath in fears for the safety of the ship.

But the "Fire Fly" was a staunch boat and possessed a wise and brave commander.

Morning came, but with no signs of the storm's abatement.

Jane attempted to leave her room, but was unable to maintain an upright position for any length of time.

She was thinking what she should do for food, when there came a heavy rap on her room door. Wondering what was wanted, she managed to open it, and, swinging it back, looked out.

The fat man stood there, steadying himself as best he could, and holding in his hand a wicker basket and a small coffee can.

Jane, remembering the "hand-pressing" on the previous evening, was about to shut the door and keep him out, but he was not to be snubbed in so cavalier a manner.

"Good-morning, Miss Brent," he said. "I thought you would require breakfast, and so I have brought some. The storm is as bad as ever, and no prospect of fair weather for some days, so the captain says, and you will be obliged to keep your room. However, I'll see that you don't starve."

She paused for a moment, but the coffee sent up a fragrant smell, and a delicious odour was emitted from the basket.

"I won't be too angry with him," thought she; "I'll take the breakfast and postpone my rage until after the food is swallowed. It's well enough to punish such presuming creatures as men are, but I don't feel inclined to starve myself to do it."

She reached out her hand and took the proffered food, thanking him with a bow.

The storm grew fiercer as the day progressed, and the captain of the ship looked troubled.

Suddenly the tall masts snapped like pipe stems and fell with a heavy crash into the sea.

"It is of no use," said he, "we shall sink."

He examined his chart and found they were miles away, gradually nearing the rocky shores of southern England, where there were shoals and sandbars, and sharp-fanged crags jutting out into the sea, that the captain knew the gallant "Fire Fly" could not avoid. Doddworth stood beside him.

"What do you think of it?" asked he, in an anxious tone, as the captain drew a tremulous sigh.

"What do I think? I think that in an hour's time our bodies will have started on a downward course for the bottom of the ocean."

"There is no hope?"

"None."

Even as he spoke the shattered ship struck upon a submerged rock, reeling with the collision.

A great cry ran over the vessel, a cry that rose high and fearful above the roar of the storm:

"The ship has struck and is on fire!"

(To be continued.)

THE SECRET OF SCHWARZENBURG.

CHAPTER XXX.

MAW agitated, tearful explanations had been exchanged, and the basis of new and tender friendships formed before the next day noon brought the same group together.

There was no longer any doubt or fear among them. Von Schubert came softly into their midst, and said, solemnly:

"The prince is dead!"

Not another word was needed. A deep profound silence fell upon them all. Lady Viola stretched out her hand to him, and he took it tenderly, but without other speech than the dumb, earnest, could give her.

Lady Pauline sat with clasped hands and prayerful eyes lifted upward. Aubrey's arm was around her, and Leina was leaning at their feet, a hand with each, but they both felt that her thoughts were away with the husband she had lost.

How long the silence would have lasted could not be told, for there came a sudden hurrying step, and Stephano rushed into the room.

"Father, Viola—are they here? Serena, Leina. Oh, Heaven be praised that you are safe!" he ejaculated, incoherently, as he dashed from one to the other, and remained at last holding Serena's hand clutched tightly in his.

And then he turned with a joyful smile to Leina.

"Leina, dear, there is someone else below. Whom do you think I chanced upon as I made my hasty exit from the wharf, where they tumbled me off so unceremoniously? It is so strange, so almost incredible! My Serena, your wise forethought brought it about: The bottle you threw into the water reached the shore, and the finder carried it to Nat, who was just able to sit up in his bed, after that severe illness. He lost no time, I'll tell you; he took the first steamer across the water—he and Paul and Penelope, Ross, little Leina. They are fairly dying to clasp you in their arms."

"Nat—dear Mr. Nathaniel, safe! That wicked man made us think he was dead," ejaculated Serena, in a voice of intense gratitude. "And they can tell me about my poor grandmother."

"My darling old Auntie Pen!" cried Leina.

"They came with the English Consul. They appealed to him, claiming you two girls as English citizens," resumed Stephano. "Is it safe to allow them up here?"

And he looked doubtfully at Herr Von Schubert.

"He is our friend, Stephano—he is our best friend," declared Viola, promptly.

"It is true," confirmed his father.

And Stephano's ingenuous forehead cleared.

"Send for them at once. I heard the great news as I came in that the prince is dead."

And then Stephano hastily pulled his father away.

"Father, father, send for Bederich at once," he whispered. "If you want to secure the heiress, I know her head is full of this Aubrey Dalbeg, and—it's no use to expect anything of me. I am pledged to her friend—I will live or die for Serena. I yield all my claims to Bederich, for I will never marry any but Serena. There, now my mind is free!"

His father had no ability to respond to this vehement and startling declaration. He only stared a

moment bewilderedly into the young man's face, and then sat down again.

Stephano, drawing a long breath, returned to Serena's side. In a few moments the door again unclosed, and Nat, pale and thin, but a glad, eager light in his eyes, entered followed by Penelope and Paul.

The two girls sprang forward with joyful cries, and were clasped tenderly and close.

"Auntie Pen—Auntie Pen," said Leina, sorrowfully. "Oh, how you have pined! how you have mourned for me! You are so pale, so pale and thin!"

Penelope's great deep eyes were full of unutterable joy.

"You are safe, my darling. You are safe!" she kept murmuring.

"Safe, and in my castle at last!" answered Leina, gaily. "And, oh, Auntie Pen, I have found my mother. Come and see my mother!"

"Your mother!" echoed Penelope, in a hollow voice. "Why do you jest with me?"

Nat had turned too with a sudden start, and with the first investigating glance towards the rest of the group, for he had been holding Serena's hands in his, and tenderly relating the tidings he brought of the poor old grandmother's sudden but peaceful end.

His eyes came to Lady Pauline's face at last, and, turning frightfully pale, he caught at Serena's shoulder, and steadied himself there.

"Serena, what does she mean? Who is the blue-eyed lady yonder?" he gasped, faintly.

"It is true, Mr. Nathaniel, it is Leina's mother. Ah, me, it is the most I envy her. Is she not noble and beautiful? All my heart pours itself in admiration at her feet. It is the Baroness of Schwarzenburg, Mr. Nathaniel. She has suffered everything, and yet has been so brave and true and loyal to her dead husband. Her story will melt your heart. The prince gave out that she was dead. He carried her away to a gloomy house in the forest, and kept her there, year after year, adding hardship to hardship to force her to yield the secret hiding-place of some important papers, and to consent to receive his suit. Such a wonderful, grand creature as every look and word proves her! Oh, if I were Leina I should almost reverence the ground on which she treads!"

He shut his eyes a moment, and she felt the tremble and quiver that ran through his frame.

"You are ill—you are too much overcome, dear Mr. Nathaniel," she whispered.

"Yes, let me sit down quietly. Say nothing, my child; I shall soon recover."

She obeyed him quietly, brought a chair, and put him into it, and stood before him as a shield.

Paul Foss had proceeded toward the larger group. He approached Herr Von Schubert hesitatingly.

"You have received the young lady. I hope you are not angry with us for this strange and unwarrantable appearance of hers. It is still a mystery to us. And his highness is dead I am told. Did he die without knowing of her arrival? I hope he was not seriously angry with us."

"Nay," replied Von Schubert, gravely, "no one can accuse you of failing to perform your duty in this matter. I am aware of the reward promised you, the restoration of the family estate that was forfeited by your grandfather. Circumstances have changed all things, but if I remain of influence with the present king, whose situation is precarious in the extreme, or with his successor, my influence shall be exerted to secure the fulfilment of the agreement. Still I must warn you that such may not be the case. I may myself be in disgrace, for if such a thing could have been done I should yesterday have exerted all my power to snatch this innocent young girl from the hands of the prince. But he is dead now. And I trust her claim as the daughter of the baron is in no danger of dispute."

"Leina," cried out Penelope Foss, sharply, "do you love this new-found mother? Will it be a sore trial to give up this grand house?"

"What do you mean, Auntie Pen? How wild your eyes look!"

"Shall I speak the truth—Heaven's solemn truth here before the people?" demanded Penelope, catching both the girl's hands and holding them so fiercely that Leina shrank back.

But she looked earnestly into the worn, haggard face, and answered, bravely:

"Yes, Auntie Pen, speak the whole truth."

"Amen!" echoed Nat's voice as he bent forward and peered into Penelope's face as if to read her very soul.

"Then I will do it," spoke Penelope, low and solemnly. "The lady yonder may be the Baroness Pauline. She looks like the portraits, and more like one I knew better—her kinsman, Konrad Darr; but you are not her child. You are no Schwarzenburg, Leina. Oh, my darling, have pity if you can, and not kill me with your anger and disappointment. For I, poor miserable, forsaken Penelope, am your mother."

Paul Foss leaped forward and shook her fiercely.

"You are crazed, Penelope, as Theodosia always

said you would be. Have we not taken care of her from a very babe? Does she not bear the mark—the stamp of Schwarzenburg's Silver Brand? How can there be a mistake?"

"You are innocent, Paul," returned she, meekly. "You are all innocent of the cheat—I alone am to blame. Listen, and you will understand. You know my mild ways as a girl, and the strict, hard hand my father and Theodosia, his model, kept upon me. How could it be otherwise than natural that, when I went away to my indulgent, ease-loving aunt's, I should fall into trouble? I loved and married a young student in the university near—loved and married him all in secret, and in my giddy mind thought it a fine jest to astonish Theodosia with until that terrible day when I was called to my father's dying bed and made to kneel with the rest of you and swear solemnly never to marry until the trust bequeathed to the family was safely accomplished. I was so afraid of my father, and so overwhelmed with horror that I knew not what I did. After it, the full enormity of what I had done came over me, and made me more a coward than ever. I was called away again. A new horror dazed my brain—my young husband had been killed—killed or murdered—and no one knew that I had any claim upon him. While yet my brain was dazed with the anguish and horror of all this my illness came upon me. My poor aunt, horrified and ashamed, took me to an hospital under a false name, and there my child was born. She made me leave it, and hurried me home in answer to Theodosia's call for my assistance with the new charge, the babe of the Schwarzenburgs, which had been given over to them almost at moment of birth. It was necessary that its existence should be kept a profound secret, and while they were making ready for a departure abroad Theodosia sent me with the child back to my aunt's. The moment she proposed it the wild project leaped into my mind. The Silver Brand which had been used to mark the noble infant was still in Theodosia's possession. I stole it, and hurried away with the child. Do you see how Fate helped me? A poor creature in the hospital where my babe remained had given birth to a feeble little thing which died suddenly two days after its mother. I was alone in the ward, having taken the nurse's place. It was an instant's work to change the clothing. I put the dead babe in my own child's place. I laid the heir of the Schwarzenburgs beside the dead woman, and the grandmother came back in an hour and took it away, and the wrist of my own child whom we have nursed and cared for, I marked with the Silver Brand. No one discovered, no one has ever suspected the deception. Do you understand? Is there need of my saying more?"

Lady Pauline came forward fiercely, "My child—my true daughter," she demanded. "There was a wild cry of joy—a sudden rush, and Serena had flung herself at the lady's feet.

"Mother, mother! oh, my mother."

"It is true. She is right. Serena is your daughter," spoke Penelope, faintly.

Leina had turned away—had clasped both her hands over her eyes, and was sobbing bitterly.

It was natural enough. The noble ancestry, the proud old home, the beautiful, stately mother—it was hard to have them all swept away.

Shivering as with an ague, poor Penelope turned to go. Then it was that Leina drew away her hands, the hot tears plashing over her cheeks, while her warm, generous heart vindicated itself.

"No, no," she cried, choking and gasping to clear her voice from sobs. "No, no, you must not go. I love you—I have always loved you. Auntie Pen, give me time to be used to the change, and I will be a true and loving child to you."

Penelope turned, a radiant smile breaking over the wan face.

"And forgive me, Leina, forgive me for coming and taking away all these grand hopes and leaving you only a poor, broken-down, guilty mother."

"Yes, yes, if there is anything to forgive. I love you, mother!"

The last word was pronounced tremulously, with a little effort, but Penelope uttered an ecstatic cry, and hurrying back caught Leina's hand and covered that and her very dress with passionate kisses and warm, relieving tears.

Nat strode forward and laid his hand on her bowed head.

"Penelope, you were married, you said. Who was the child's father? Speak, I pray you."

"Konrad Darn," answered Penelope.

"Oh, how bitterly I was deceived!" exclaimed Nat. "Poor dupe of that wicked man. I challenged, I fought with Konrad Darn, believing that it was my own bride who had deceived and cheated me. I wounded him, but I had no suspicion it was fatal. To this day I believe that some ruffian was hired to finish the murder, that it might be a new claim to hold me to that princely villain's power. It was he who so adroitly fastened suspicion upon poor Darn. It was he who poisoned my kinsman's mind against me."

"Whose voice is that? Who speaks?" implored Lady Pauline, springing up, and staring into the bronzed, bearded face with deepening, dilating eyes.

He turned with a glad, transported smile, and hurrying forward knelt down at her feet.

"My angel wife! none the less an angel that it is the earth and not the skies, as I thought, which holds her."

"Arnold! Arnold! Oh, it is cruel to deceive me," she implored.

"There is no deceit. I am Arnold Schwarzenburg. They left me to drown and believed that it had happened. But I reached shore. I fled away. I believed my wife false, my reputation lost, my honour in danger, and that man held over me a power that any moment I knew could give me, innocent as I was, to the block."

She had her arms round him, but at the same instant slipped away white and cold. The great joy was more overwhelming than her bitterest trial.

While Viola and Serena were anxiously attending to her resuscitation Valentin Baer came forward slowly with head drooping low in shame.

"Arnold, Baron of Schwarzenburg! Heaven sees that there is none who can more sincerely rejoice at your return than the cowardly kinsman who left you to your fate. What can I do to prove my bitter remorse, my sincere penitence?"

"It needs nothing, Valentin. I have known the truth long ago, and forgiven you at the same time. Did I not write you that the witness in England could clear you from the black charge which kept you a prisoner at Schwarzenburg? Do you not see that I am Naiman Womberg?"

The two grasped hands in joyful reconciliation. And here the Baroness Pauline revived and murmured her husband's name fondly.

A joyful, loving group surrounded her.

It was a scene too tumultuously rapturous for portrayal.

Aubrey Dalberg had stolen out where Leina stood hesitating and half disconsolate.

"I am so thankful," he murmured in her ear. "I could not but be reconciled to have you for my sister, Leina."

And Leina blushed hotly, and saw a world of comfort also in the new view.

Penelope was wise enough to understand.

"Ah!" said she, "you may find her parentage not so humble; the Daras must have been a noble family."

"That is my family name," spoke Lady Pauline, softly. "My mother was a Darn, and Konrad was my beloved cousin."

At which Leina's bright face dimpled again into joyous smiles, and she came back to Serena's side.

"That accounts for the likeness between them, the likeness and yet the difference," said Stephano, and, with a little embarrassed hem, he added, for his father's ear alone, "I take back what I said, I will not yield to Roderich my claims upon the Schwarzenburg heiress."

"You deserve her, Stephano, since you chose her disinterestedly," replied that father, proudly.

"And, if only we clear the matter with the court, I see not but there is a joyful solution," spoke Von Schubert, presently. "It is certain that the Baron Arnold's appearance must clear Herr Von Baer and give him his liberty. About the estate—"

"We will have no division," spoke up Arnold, quickly. "Have we not suffered and mistrusted and quarrelled enough to live together the rest of our days in peace and love? Nothing can be more satisfactory. I have loved Leina all these years as my daughter. This brave new son of mine will give her to me for one in reality. My precious Serena here will make my disinterested and gallant Stephano still dearer to me. Valentin's daughter shall share our love and home."

"I beg your pardon," said Von Schubert, brusquely.

Baron Arnold laughed gaily.

"Ho! sits the wind in that quarter? I am right proud that my fair kinswoman has vanquished so worthy an enemy of our house. So then there is an honourable and delightful settlement of all difficulties, if only his majesty can overlook these disagreeable truths, and I can clear myself from that false charge of treason so adroitly wound about me."

"I have the papers safe. I thought to clear your memory. Oh! may Heaven be praised that it is your living honour I have shielded!" cried his wife, joyously.

"And now we need Dr. Mentz. I want every proof that the law requires, though my heart is already convinced," spoke up Aubrey.

"Here is a letter that came to the steamer when I arrived in England under your name," said Stephano. "I knew not what else to do but to keep it until I could put it in your hands. It has a black seal."

Aubrey seized it and read it through, wiping away his tears as he folded it.

"The whole is explained. She who has been a

kind and indulgent mother to me is dead. She left a dying declaration that I was not her own child. They adopted me in Germany. Doctor Mentz can explain the rest. There is no doubt—no doubt at all."

"It only remains to hurry to the king," said Von Schubert.

"The king is dead. He died almost at the same hour with his royal highness," announced Hornberg at the door in the voice of one dazed with amazement and awe. "A courier has just arrived; the two bearers of evil tidings met midway."

"Then we are safe and secure. The storm cloud has lifted from our path," spoke Arnold and Valentin in one breath.

"My good Carl, come hither," called Lady Pauline, seeing the aeronaut's anxious face behind Hornberg. "Do you hear the great news? You are free to hasten back and relieve the generous heart of the dear little fraulein. Bring her here to share in our joy and our prosperity. You shall have a balloon that shall content alike your pride and your skill. Ah, can I realize that this joyful day which rose so black and frowningly has given me home and loved ones and happiness and safety?"

"The dangers past, the clouds dispersed, the mysteries explained," echoed her husband.

"A happy termination to 'The Secret of Schwarzenburg,'" quoth Von Schubert.

THE END.

THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

CHAPTER XII.

ESTELLE sat locked in her own pretty chamber at the Rectory.

She had been home a week and had nearly recovered from the prostration of the great blow which had befallen her.

She had her writing-desk before her and was looking at some old letters.

Dora, who had peeped through the keyhole to find what her young mistress was about, imagined she was looking over love missives which she had received from the earl, and crept away with a tear in either eye, commiserating her poor, heart-broken young lady.

But they were not love-letters which engrossed their reader. They were the same three epistles which we once read over Estelle's shoulder the night on which she stole them from the earl's desk.

She had desired to refresh her memory and to make sure she was mistaken on no one point, so she wetted the sealed edge of the red silk which she had pasted over the bottom of the little portable desk, and carefully lifted it up on two sides and withdrew the hidden papers.

She was in a deep study over them. She was reviewing her situation and prospects.

Nothing had been gained by her engagement with the earl; on the contrary, she had betrayed herself to Lord Harry so clearly that she almost despaired of ever regaining even the ground she had lost.

Then, too, she had spent every pound of her father's savings in bridal attire, which she could not even have the poor satisfaction of displaying.

She must go into mourning and leave those beautiful and costly garments to fade and get out of style. This, of itself, was a heavy grief to our worldly-minded Estelle.

As the almost-widow of the earl no suitor would dare approach her for at least one tiresome year. On every side the prospect was gloomy.

Lord Harry despised her.

"Never mind," she thought, smiling cruelly to herself, "these documents must and shall change his opinion of me! There is no doubt of the truth of my supposition," she continued, running over the letters again, "and I certainly believe that it was the constant, secret, prying anxiety of this hidden fact which brought on the heart disease which killed the earl. He was a sensitive man and frightfully proud. He might have righted the wrong long ago, and for ever dispelled the danger which now impends over his heirs; but he was not willing to make his trouble public, not even to right his children. It was a misjudgment of his of which I am to reap the benefit. Yes, my disdainful Lord Harry, Earl of Bramblethorpe, I will yet have you, a beggar, at my feet! I feel quite sure of it. Yet I must work quickly, or Captain Bramblethorpe will have taken himself back to India. He is just the man to pursue this thing to the death."

She returned the three letters to their hiding-place and re-glued the silk to the bottom of the box, locked it, and put the tiny key in her purse.

She had some business to transact that afternoon, and none too much time.

Mrs. Captain was to return to London on the morrow, and she desired to make some arrangement with her for having her bridal trousseau—at least, the

perishable part of it—disposed of privately by the establishment where it was made up.

As much of her father's wasted money as she could in this way restore she would return to the bank.

Meantime the earl's costly presents of jewellery would more than balance any loss.

These reflections were not as sentimental as might be expected from a young lady whose sorrows had drawn forth the sympathy even of Jenkins and the newspapers; but they were very natural to Estelle.

Before unlocking the door she stood in front of the dressing-glass and put her face through a curious process.

By the aid of a pink saucer and a tiny brush she gave a flush as of recent tears to the rims of her eyelids; then with a tablet of Indian ink and another brush she darkened the circles about them, until any one, to have seen her, would have sworn she had been "crying her eyes out."

She was naturally pale, and her black dress aided the effect.

When she admitted Dora that faithful creature was ready to cry in sympathy to think her mistress had been "shutting of herself up, and breaking of her art all alone."

If she had said "practising her art," she would have hit the nail on the head.

"Tell Pearson to get the pony-phæton, Dora. I must see Mrs. Captain De Vere. She is going back to town in the morning. I did think she would drive over here; but since she has failed to do so I must go to the Villa. Those things, Dora—those dress-ses-ses, and *lingerie*, and all, must be so sold, you know. I shall never, ne-never wear them, and poor papa is not a-able to lose so much."

"Your poor, dear, beautiful clothes!" sobbed Dora, in echo. "I never thought it could come to that, indeed, Miss Estelle!"

She summoned the phaeton, and presently Estelle was on the way to the Villa, driving her own little pony, as she usually did when going so short a distance.

As she was driving out through the gateway she met Mr. Jordan coming in. He, too, saw the red eyelids, and the dark circles under them, the pale cheeks and the depressed air.

The sight of the mourning garments gave him a strange sensation, partly of yearning pity, partly of passionate love and longing.

Oh, if he might comfort her! He could not feel that her grief was that of a woman who had lost a soul-companion.

He knew that Estelle could not have loved the earl as she might a younger man; but he gave her credit for some real affection and some sincere sorrow.

It is true she had coquetted with him, cruelly, but young girls were sometimes thoughtlessly coquetish in the first flush of their womanly power, who, after all, had warm, true hearts.

He worshipped the shadow of this brilliant creature and he could not see how worse than hollow was her heart.

"There is room for you, Mr. Jordan," said she, drawing rein. "If you have any errand to the Villa I will take you over."

Now he had no errand there—in fact, he had just come from there; but he could not withstand the temptation of being so near to his idol during their few minutes' drive, so he took the offered seat beside her.

"You look so ill, Estelle—shall I drive?"

"As you please," she said, languidly resigning the reins, and, leaning back, she neither spoke nor stirred until they arrived; nor would her humble worshipper intrude upon her sadness with any remarks of his.

Estelle could scarcely repress a smile at his mute, respectful sympathy; and thus, in silence, they reached the Villa.

As she was intending to remain but a few moments Mr. Jordan would not have the pony taken away, but sat in the phaeton awaiting her return.

As he sat under the arched gateway, idly brushing the flies from the pony's neck with the loose reins, he prayed, with a sort of divided prayer—this really good curate did, over and over—to be delivered from temptation. But as a house "divided against itself cannot stand," so a prayer put up with half the heart, while the other half cries eagerly, "I must and will yield to temptation," must fall to the ground. The curate's prayer never rose as high as the stone arch over his head, let alone soaring strongly up into the blue ether which smiled and brooded over the earth that blazing August day.

It would be difficult to describe Mr. Jordan's feelings when the swift news of the disaster in the London church had reached him. In a state of dull and listless misery he had waited tidings of the marriage, and instead came those of death. He was a religious man, and he tried to be, and was, sorry.

At the same time he could not resist a consciousness of relief, as if a man about to be hung should receive an order that the fulfilment of the sentence be left to some future week or month. It was not a pardon—only a respite. It distressed him that one of his best and most appreciative friends, the gentle and noble earl, was dead; and yet he felt a keen thrill of joy in the thought that Estelle was not a wife.

It only proved how very, very simple was Mr. Jordan; for whoever heard of a rector's daughter marrying her father's curate?

Bewitched by a pair of dark and dazzling eyes, by a musical voice, a gay laugh, a girl's thousand nameless graces, Mr. Jordan could no longer see matters in their everyday light.

This golden glamour which Estelle had woven about herself had been effected in her earlier days, before she had such serious business on hand as now required all her powers.

She had tried her "prentice hand" on the curate, and had succeeded only too well.

Indeed his intense, manly love (not a bit like a pastor's) had at first almost snared her in the net of her own spreading.

She could not deny to herself when she thought of it that she had encouraged him to an extent, indeed, which she would fain obliterate from his memory and her own.

She had walked with him, talked with him, and given him love's own smiles, and more than one kiss too—but that was some time ago, she was wiser now—and this was why he clung so blindly and tenaciously to some thread of hope that after all she really loved only him, and that it was ambition, love of splendour and gay society which induced her to deny him and herself.

He thought her capable of better things, and that it was the fascination of high life at the Villa which had led her away from her real self.

If only she had no connection with Brambletop Villa she would be the loving, simple darling he desired.

He was thoroughly mistaken, as we know, but the mistake kept his love alive.

He sat there skimming with the flies and thinking it all over, while Estelle held interview with Mrs. Captain De Vere.

She did not shed any tears as she enjoined the lady to be as sharp as possible with the milliners or they would get the better of her, but her voice was studiously low and monotonous; and who could expect tears, even over the wedding gear, when it was evident that their fountain had been drained?

These red eyelids told their own mute story. Mrs. De Vere felt dreadfully sorry for her; so did the sweet, sad sisters whose hearts really were wrung with sorrow.

Lord Harry felt a little touched also as he met her coming down the grand staircase.

Her pathetic face would have made an impression on any one who did not know how much of it she owed to a skilful use of her talents as an artist.

Estelle had a good perception of the character of grief, and only used her own face as a background on which to depict it.

"Where are you going?" inquired Lord Harry.

"Home. I had an errand to Mrs. Captain De Vere."

"Will you not remain until after dinner?"

"Thank you; I must go home."

"Shall I go with you?"

"I have Mr. Jordan for an escort, thank you."

Her dull voice, her impassive features, these were not like the mock-heros he had anticipated. He felt some remorse for his harsh judgment of her as Estelle slipped quietly by and went out without an effort to secure his attention. She was convinced of a purpose to neglect her, he had not been to the Rectory—whither she had insisted on going at once—since their return to the country.

To atone for this error he resolved to ride over after dinner and make a brief call.

Estelle would have been his father's wife had not that tragic death occurred; it behoved him to treat her, for his father's sake, with the outward forms of respect.

"Have I kept you waiting?" Estelle asked as she took her place in the phaeton.

"I do not know," answered her companion, turning his large gray eyes dreamily toward her. "I have been lost in my own thoughts, and have not the least idea how long I have been here."

"About an hour," she said.

"Indeed? If you had asked me I should have said ten minutes."

"Your thoughts must have been pleasant," she said, gravely.

"Not so pleasant as they were absorbing. Yet," he added as they drove slowly down the avenue, "some of them were delightful. I was thinking of the past, Estelle, when you were almost a child, so

kind, so artless, so satisfied with your own lovely, quiet home—so fond—of me."

He was staring straight ahead between the pony's ears and did not see the mocking smile of scorn which flitted over her face.

"That must have been long ago, indeed," she said, "and, Mr. Jordan, I must say that you forget yourself—what is due to me—to introduce such a topic now."

"Forgive me," he went on, eagerly, "and do not misunderstand me. I do not desire to talk of myself to you, Estelle. I know well it is no time to speak of my feelings or wishes. But I must say to you, dear, dear Estelle, that I believe this affliction was sent to bring you back to your own girlish, better nature. You would have married for a title, a coronet—to be a great man's wife—but the jewelled crown was snatched from you even in the hour of triumph. Oh, Estelle, if you will take this as a lesson—to be more humble, to despise the vanities of the world—to trust only to your warm, loving heart, I believe you may yet be very happy. There is so much chance for you to do good—here, in this very neighbourhood—so many sorrowful to be comforted—"

"Chief among whom, I may suppose, is the Curate of Bramblethorpe Rectory."

He turned and looked at her in astonishment, her voice was so stinging with bitterest sarcasm.

"A very pretty sermon," she continued, "I think I see to what it leads. You wish me to infer that it would be better for me to be a curate's wife than a duchess."

He blushed to the roots of his hair, for he felt guilty, despite his real anxiety for her soul's welfare and his real desire that her better nature might be developed by her disappointment.

Far—far in the background, he was conscious, arose a picture of this restless, aspiring girl as his tamed and loving wife.

"Estelle, I would influence you only for your own good," he stammered.

"You do not know what is good for me," she retorted, scornfully. "Doubtless your self-conceit prompts you to believe that your companionship must be most profitable to me! There lies your mistake. If I ever did encourage you to think so, Mr. Jordan, it was when I was most ignorant of my own nature. Since then I have learned what I require, and I tell you now that I love rank, society, all that you would deery because it is beyond your reach. I may never attain to my ambition; but I tell you, once for all, that if the time ever comes when I think again of marriage I shall step up and not down. Is that plain enough? Nevertheless, you may preach to me—you only do your duty," she added, with an attempt to soften her harshness as she observed how pale he had grown.

"No, do not sweeten the bitter," he said. "Perhaps it is good for me. Heaven knows we are apt to be selfish, even when we endeavour most sincerely to labour only in its honour. Estelle, I pray to Heaven you may be good and happy, though I am selfish and unblest."

As ashamed of herself, Estelle was tempted to beg his pardon, and to flatter him out of his silence; but she was too wise to yield to the temptation.

"Better crush him at once than by slow torture," she reflected.

By which we may see that Estelle after all was not utterly merciless.

"Mr. Jordan," she said as they drove in at the Rectory gate, speaking in a low voice, but one so decided as to sound hard, "I was very young when I gave you the encouragement which I did. I know now that my feelings were those of friendship—I admired and respected you as I admired and respected my dear father. I still have for you the most friendly feeling, but if you persist in tormenting me with demonstrations which cannot but be unwelcome to me, I am afraid I shall soon begin to hate you."

"Estelle!" he cried, sharply, as if she had wounded him with a knife.

She only compressed her lips into a determined silence; and in this silence their ride was ended.

The consequence was that the rector dined alone, his curate remaining away from a desire to avoid Estelle until he should have conquered an appearance of calmness—she keeping herself in her room to give him time to recover himself.

Her faithful maid brought her dinner, with kind inquiries from her papa, and his advice that she should not confine herself so much to her apartment.

Her enforced retirement was very wearisome to the young lady.

She had always found the Rectory lonely, and it was doubly so after her gay London life.

She could not even console herself with her piano, at present, her rôle as mourner preventing such amusement.

As she sat drearily at her window, watching the

red fade out of the western sky, and the cool August twilight settle down she heard the wheels of a carriage on the drive, and was delighted to recognize Lord Harry.

She had seen him only a few hours previously, but yet her heart-beats quickened and her eyes brightened.

"It is strange how I love him," she murmured to herself. "The more he neglects and almost faults me the more power he has over me. I am as much his slave as poor Mr. Jordan is mine."

Presently a servant came to say that the earl had inquired for her.

The use of the title startled her at first, but it already came glibly from the mouths of those who addressed her.

She went down and found her father conversing with their visitor, who made a call brief and almost formal; but his manner toward Estelle was kinder than it had been for months, so that she felt quite happy after he had gone, thinking:

"Perhaps he will love me yet."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE young earl found that he had inherited more than a fortune and title—a large share of responsibility.

He was expected to fill his late father's seat in the House of Lords, to take an interest in county affairs, and hold long interviews with his stewards and farmers.

He was hardly allowed the month of August in seclusion at his country seat before business began to make claims on him.

He had to go frequently to the city. Already friends were advising him to marry.

It seemed almost a necessity that there should be a Countess of Bramblethorpe to take her place in the town places and the country villa.

It had been decided that Augusta's marriage should take place at the time that fixed—just before Christmas.

She had repelled the suggestion for some time—but Mr. Douglas had truly represented to her that she stood more in need of his love and companionship than before her father's death—that he was quite willing to give up the prospect of a brilliant wedding, and to marry her in the quietest, most private manner at Bramblethorpe Villa with its good rectory to perform the ceremony and only the family present.

She had finally yielded to his earnest plea, and the wedding was to come off at Christmas.

After she should have gone to another home there would only be Clara—childish, petted, little Clara—to preside over her brother's household.

Even Augusta said to Lord Harry—as we like best to call him—that she should feel more content to desert him if some fitting wife were about to step in and take her place.

His only answer had been an impatient gesture, followed by a sigh.

Augusta was about to ask him if he had changed in his sentiments toward Agnes MacLeod, or why he had made no attempt to renew her acquaintance, but a feeling of delicate reserve restrained her.

It was unfortunate that she did not speak out, as then she would have learned that her letter, containing the story of Agnes's refusal to marry her cousin, had never been received.

The excitement attending upon their father's brief engagement, followed by his death, had prevented her making any particular allusion to Agnes; and now, conjecturing that the lovers had quarrelled, and that Harry felt too sore about it to confide it even to her, she remained silent.

By such slight accidents are human destinies controlled.

Once, however, the subject came up between the three young ladies as they sat in Augusta's chamber sewing and chatting, making some pretty trifle for the bride-elect, and prattling of love, as girls under such circumstances generally do.

"I do not believe in marriage without love," said Augusta, with great decision for her, the pink deepening in her cheeks. "I am so glad whenever I think of it that Agnes MacLeod refused at the last hour to marry that dreadful cousin of hers. What is the matter, Estelle?"

"Nothing serious. I ran the needle into my finger. See how it bleeds!"

Estelle's voice trembled, and her colour changed—but the drops of blood trickling from her finger accounted for that.

She had wounded herself with the great start she gave when Augusta made that last remark.

Clara got a strip of fine linen from a worn-out handkerchief and bound up the finger.

"How fortunate that I did not stain the muslin! It would have ruined it," laughed Estelle. "Harry

used to admire Miss MacLeod immensely. Does he know that she fitted her Scotch laird?"

"Oh, yes—I wrote him all about it while he was in Switzerland."

"Has he been to see her since?"

"No. In truth, I think they must have got angry with each other. I know they are not in correspondence, and he never mentions her name. I wish they would make up. I should be charmed with her for a sister-in-law. She is so tall and handsome, she would make a superb countess. And Harry is old enough to have been married these five years. He really needs a wife, as I tell him."

"Yes," pursued Clara, ardently; "after I am married I do think he will have to find some lady to take our place. To be sure I have had no offer yet, but our neighbour, Sir Howard Bolling, is in a desperate state about me."

And she smiled to herself to recall some of the very expressive "sheep's eyes" which the old bachelor baronet had cast at her.

"I am afraid Harry will never marry. He will follow in Sir Howard's footsteps," remarked Estelle.

"I wonder if he will look like him at the same age!" mused Clara. "I am going to frighten him by suggesting the possibility. Perhaps he will take warning and choose a wife before it is too late!"

More of the same badinage followed.

Estelle sustained her part in it, though she was far from feeling as merry as she appeared.

A thrill of alarm had run through her breast at learning that Agnes MacLeod was not a wife, as she had supposed, and might reappear as her rival at any moment.

She put a different construction upon Lord Harry's silence from what his sister had. She inferred at once that he had never received Augusta's letter—indeed, she remembered his remarking on his return that he had left Geneva abruptly, and lost some mail-matter there, and that it was his ignorance of Miss MacLeod's unwedded freedom which caused his silence on the subject. Jealousy made her quick at inference; she had the truth of the matter at once.

She was very silent the remainder of the afternoon. Her companions did not wonder at this. It was only six weeks since their dear father had been taken from them, and when Estelle was gloomy or preoccupied they took it for granted that her thoughts were upon his grave. They had some time since persuaded her to spend most of her time with them, because they were lonely at the villa and felt that she must be so at the Rectory. Her staying away at first had been only done for effect, and when she did resume her old familiarity at the villa she allowed its inmates to perceive that she did so with the most sensitive reluctance.

After all, men are easily deceived by women. It seems as if their eyes, so clear in judgment of each other, are dazzled and blinded when they turn them upon a young and pretty woman. They may be critical and sarcastic when she exercises her arts upon other men, but immediately one becomes the object of attack his criticism is all disarmed.

This was somewhat the case with Lord Harry. He never had trusted Estelle; had known her vain and ambitious; yet now he was badly-grown, less harsh in his opinion. Her morning garments alone gave her a certain influence, and certainly she appeared very much changed from her own self—quiet, almost anxious to avoid him—said, humbled by the remorse which must mingle with her grief.

He had lately grown so kind, so almost tender in his manner that wild hopes had sprung up in the bosom which seemed to throb so warily and boldly. Estelle was growing to believe that some time he would come to her and offer his hand without the necessity of her springing upon him the trap which she had prepared. "And that," she had reflected, "would be so much better for all concerned—for the girls as well as their brother. No need then to publish the dead earl's secret, nor to detain the captain from his return to India." She would have not only the title she coveted but the man she loved.

(To be continued.)

STRAWBERRIES were sold in the streets of Rome on New Year's Day, and gardeners have picked pans grown in the open air.

CALIFORNIA JUSTICE.—In the early days of California the laws against dishonesty were so strict that thefts were punished with death. A horse thief was tried, and the jury, having retired to deliberate upon their verdict, were slow in returning into court. The judge pushed his head through the door of their room and found they had not agreed. "Take your time, gentlemen," he said, "but remember we are waiting for this room to lay out the corpse in."

PEERS.—The mortality in the ranks of the peerage last year has been large. Eighteen peers have

died, viz.: The Earl of Lonsdale, 84; Viscount Boyne, 75; Lord Clarendon, 74; Lord Inchiquin, 72; the Duke of Leeds, 70; the Earl Clancairny, 68; Lord Dalling and Bulwer, 68; the Marquis of Londonderry, 67; Lord Southampton, 67; the Duke of Bedford, 63; the Earl of Moray, 62; Lord Harris, 62; Lord Audley, 55; Lord Gifford, 55; the Earl of Caryfort, 47; Lord Hastings, 47; the Earl of Kellie, 34; and the Marquis of Curzon, 31. Lord Dalling's title has become extinct, and the successors to the peerages of Curzon, Hastings, and Southampton are minors. During the year four new peers have been created—Viscount Ossington, and Barons Ettrick, Hanmer, and Selborne.

THE LAUGH OF WOMAN.—A woman has no natural gift more bewitching than a sweet laugh. It is like the sound of flutes upon the water. It ripples from her in a clear, sparkling rill; and the heart that hears it feels as if bathed in the cool, exhilarating spring. Have you ever pursued an unseen figure through the trees, led on by a fairy laugh, now here, now there, now lost, now found? We have. And we are pursuing that wandering voice to this day. Sometimes it comes to us in the midst of care and sorrow, or in some business, and then we turn away and listen, and hear it ringing through the room like a silver bell, with power to scare away the evil spirits of the mind. How much we owe to that laugh! It turns prose to poetry; it dings showers of sunshine over the darkness of the wood in which we are travelling; it touches with delight even our sleep, which is no more the image of death, but is consumed with dreams that are the shadows of immortality.

RED HELM.

CHAPTER VIII.

While intent the yawning decks to ease,
Filled over and anon with rushing seas,
Some fatal billow, with moaning sweep
May whirl the hapless victims in the deep.

Falconer.
Oy went the canoe, gliding farther and farther upon her course, the island shore fast fading far behind. Bondo's schooner had been almost lost sight of when the young man, chancing to glance toward it, beheld in its appearance a certain change, which at once convinced him that the vessel was under canvas.

"We are seen," he said to Faith. "If I am not mistaken yonder craft is heading this way."

"I was afraid of that," said Faith; "we shall certainly be overtaken if Bondo has seen us."

"They have not much wind for it," remarked Brenton, "but they may lower a boat. Well, we must do the best we can. Perhaps, after all, they have not seen us, but are getting under way for some other reason."

"You are right! you are right!" cried Faith, clapping her hands, and rising. "See, yonder, far ahead there. A sail! a sail! that is what Bondo's schooner is after, and not us."

"Ay, ay! you are right," answered Brenton.

Then, rising, he took a good survey of the stranger.

"It is hard to make her out," said he, "at this distance—but, unless I am much mistaken, she is a merchantman."

"So I think," replied Faith; "in fact, unless she were such you would not see that bloodhound Bondo after her."

The young man sat down again.

"Whatever she is," said he, "she is certainly coming this way, and we will have to work hard to meet her ere Bondo overtakes us."

"Yes, although she has the wind in her favor," answered Faith, "and Bondo has to beat up against it."

The two now exerted themselves to the utmost, and soon had made such progress that the hull of the stranger was visible.

Meanwhile the other craft, which was a superb sailer, seeming, in fact, to shoot into the wind's eye, was coming up fast.

She was low in the water, built sharp about the bows, and carried a great breadth of canvas.

There was, however, nothing in her appearance to excite the suspicions of the merchantman's crew. On they came, approaching the canoe, which was now being worked with a vigour that must soon bring it alongside of the ship.

In less than a quarter of an hour the light vessel was within speaking distance of the ship.

"Who are you?" shouted a stout fellow in a blue jacket and high boots, on the poop. "Do you want to come aboard?"

"Ay, ay," answered Brenton. "Won't you throw us a rope? We are fugitives."

The vessel's main-yard was soon aback, and a rope was thrown as the canoe glided alongside.

Brenton attempted to assist Faith up the ship's

side, but the young woman, lightly leaping in the chains, was soon on deck.

The captain of the ship and his officers came from aft.

"Castaways?" inquired the former.

"Ay, ay," answered Brenton, and at once, in a few words, he explained the situation to the questioner.

"You had better give this island a wide berth," continued Brenton. "Yonder fellow you see coming up is a pirate."

"Ah, say you so?" cried the skipper. "Upon my word I thought he was a peaceful trader."

With that he turned and gave instant orders to his mate to clap on all the canvas the ship would carry, and head her away from the island.

The result of this command was that the "Reindeer," such was the vessel's name, soon was heading, close hauled, on an opposite course, at the rate of ten knots an hour.

Meantime the captain had conducted Brenton and his companion into the cabin, and spread before them some refreshments, of which, in fact, they were sadly in need.

When they had finished their meal they went on deck to see the pirate heading still in the same direction as before, and apparently gaining.

"This is bad," said the captain. "Yonder fellow must soon overtake us, and here I am without a large gun aboard. All I have is a few muskets and cutlasses."

"How many men have you?" inquired Brenton.

"Thirty-three all told," was the reply.

"How many may there be on board the pirate?" continued Brenton, turning to Faith.

"I cannot tell exactly," was her reply; "but I think about sixty. They have three guns—eight pounders."

"That is bad for us," said Captain Boom, shaking his head. "We cannot well make head against so many, I am afraid."

"There is nothing like trying, sir," said Brenton. "One thing is certain—if those fellows do overtake you they will show you no quarter. I am sure on that point."

"Then we will fight to the last, and may Heaven help us," cried Boom. "Mr. Bunt," he added, addressing his first officer, "summon all the men aft at once, and range them in line on the lee side of the quarter-deck."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response, and the order was promptly executed.

Thirty-two stout fellows came aft. These were old and young among them, mostly Englishmen, although there were a few Portuguese and Irishmen.

"Lads," said the captain, "I have called you aft to inform you that we must fight. Yonder fellow coming up is a pirate."

"Ay, ay," was the simultaneous response, and then the flashing eyes and compressing of lips betokened that the men were ready for the difficult task before them.

"That pirate," continued the skipper, "is a blood-thirsty Malay, and he carries besides his guns a crew of about sixty men, almost double our number. Nevertheless we may, by desperate fighting, succeed in keeping the scoundrels from our decks. Remember one thing, men, that they will show us no quarter if they become victors; remember that, and, when you strike, strike hard!"

"Ay, ay, ay!" cried the seamen. Then, swinging their hats above their heads, they cheered the captain three times.

He bowed and dismissed the crew, after which what muskets and cutlasses were aboard were distributed among them.

The gray light of dawn was now streaming across the waters, and the breeze, fragrant with the odour of plants and blossoms, blew freshly off shore.

A blot upon this beautiful vicinity was the pirate, stealing along towards the merchantman, between that vessel and the island.

On she came, her dark crew looking over the rails, their dusky faces showing plainly under red forecaps.

Suddenly a happy thought flashed across the mind of Brenton.

He drew the captain aside.

"I see you have several Malays aboard," he said, pointing to three islanders who stood looking over the weather rail.

"Yes, we shipped them at Honolulu, where we stopped several months ago."

"Well, sir, as those fellows can make themselves understood, let one of them act as interpreter, so that you can freely explain yourself."

"Explain myself?"

"Yes. My idea is this—that you state you intend to surrender yourself, being unable to resist them, and asking that they will show you quarter."

"Asking those pirates for quarter?"

"Ay, ay—all in strategy, you know. Thinking you

have no intention of opposing them, they will at once lie to, and prepare to send a boat aboard. Then, the wind being in your favour from your being to windward, you must suddenly direct your craft down upon theirs, amidships, by which means your vessel being the larger one, you can run them down, cutting them in two."

"A good idea," answered the captain, "and one which I hope I may succeed in carrying out."

With that he ordered his main yard hauled aback, the pirate being now within range, and lay as if waiting for him to come up.

On came the pirate, plunging up the water, and sending the spray flying even to her main yard.

Soon she was within speaking distance, when the captain of the merchantman, having summoned one of the Malays, stood, trumpet in hand, on the poop.

"Schooner ahoy!" Boom fearlessly shouted through his trumpet. "What schooner is that?"

"The 'Sea Lion,'" answered a tall Malay, springing upon the vessel's quarter. "Me soon blow you to pieces!"

Perceiving that Bondo—for the speaker was the understood Englishman, Boom deemed it unnecessary to make use of his interpreter, whom he therefore sent forward.

"You need not blow us to pieces," said Boom, "as we must surrender, having no intention to fight a craft carrying so many more men, and being so much better armed than we."

"That will," answered the savage Bondo, rubbing his hands. "If you fight us, we quick kill. We kill whether you fight or not. Then we gob never go away from here to tell."

Meanwhile Boom had his eye on the Malay craft, which had now come up still closer to the wind, so that she was in a favourable position for being struck as he intended.

With a backward wave of the hand, which was the preconcerted signal, he notified his mate that it was now time to manoeuvre, as had been previously agreed on.

"If you will promise not to harm me and my men," continued the captain, "we will lay our craft along side of yours, so that you can get aboard without lowering a boat."

"Well, me promise!" answered the Malay, showing his teeth in a savage grin, which plainly betokened that he did not mean what he said.

Boom, however, pretending he thought he did, at once braced his main yard forward, and headed away from the Malay, as if to gain the required space for manoeuvring, so as to lay himself alongside.

Having proceeded about fifty fathoms, he came round, standing for the pirate, with a speed which, from his having the wind directly off his quarter, increased every moment.

Bondo, not suspecting anything, lay as he was, his craft lightly rising and falling with the motion of the sea, her head not varying from its present direction more than a quarter of a point at a time.

"We will soon have him, if he continues to suspect nothing," said Boom to Brenton.

"Ay, ay, but see there! I believe his suspicions are excited at last. He is bracing forward his foreyard, to get out of our way."

In fact Bondo was doing this, while now and then he would turn and gesticulate in an angry manner toward Boom.

"He will soon be giving us the benefit of yonder piece," said the captain, pointing toward a gun, which the Malays seemed to be getting ready to fire upon them.

"No, he does not suspect," cried Brenton, joyfully; "you can see he merely thinks it is because we are careless that we head towards him in this manner."

"I will change our course a little," said Boom, "so as to give him the impression that we are preparing to luff up, when we get close alongside!"

Accordingly the helmsman was ordered to luff a quarter of a point, an order which he promptly obeyed.

"Now steady—steady!" said Boom, through his closed teeth.

"Ay, ay, sir, steady she goes," promptly answered the man at the wheel.

He was an old sailor, named Ben Williams, the best in the ship, and he kept the craft on a bee-line.

Meanwhile she had by this time gathered considerable headway, and was now booming along with great speed, her hull towering high above that of the pirate beyond.

The Malay, as stated, had braced forward his foreyard, but when he saw the merchantman apparently being got ready for luffing he backed the yard again and lay, as before, in wait for her.

On came the "Reindeer," the water flying in clouds from her huge bow, and was soon within a ship's length of the Malay.

Bondo, who had been impatiently waiting for the "Reindeer" to luff up, not seeing her do so, now for

the first time seemed to guess the intention of the other captain.

"Ahoy! ahoy!" he shouted; "keep off there, or you will be foul of us!"

"Keep off there at the wheel!" cried Captain Boom to the man at the helm, who had previously had instructions to keep as he was, no matter what the captain should say to him.

The ruse deceived the Malay captain, who eagerly watched for the "Reindeer" to fall off.

The vessel, however, was kept straight on, and a moment later she was within six fathoms of the schooner.

Now all at once a conviction of the trick the other captain was playing him flashed on the mind of the Malay.

His eyes alight with a terrible gleam, he sprang to the gun amidships, and ordered the gunners to discharge the piece right into the "Reindeer."

So the match could be applied, however, the ship, with a terrible crash, struck the pirate vessel, smashing her timbers and splitting her in twain.

A wild shriek went up from the deck of the doomed vessel as the ship passed on, plunging her way through the broken fragments, to which many of her crew now were seen clinging.

Bondo himself, rising astern of the ship, his face and hair covered with blood, was seen shaking his fist, while he gave vent to cries of baffled rage at the captain.

"We will leave them there," said Boom to his mate, who had come up from an inspection of the hold. "How did you find our craft below—no damage, I hope?"

"All as safe and sound as before she struck," was the reply.

The captain now directed his glances aloft to see if any injury had been sustained in that direction.

"That mainmast yard is a little sprung," he said to his mate. "Better have it repaired as soon as possible."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The mate gave the required orders, and men were soon aloft to temporarily strengthen the spar with lashings.

"We must get away from these quarters as soon as we can," said Boom, "or we shall have some more of the rascals after us. Then we will have time to make our yard stronger."

The "Reindeer" accordingly was headed away from the island under all her canvas.

"We are pursued!" said Faith, pointing ashore.

"Yonder come a couple of vessels after us."

"Ay, ay," said Brenton, noticing two schooners making out from behind a point of land, "here they come, sure enough."

"When they get here they will have to stop to pick those other fellows up, and that will help us," said the captain.

"What do you think of those clouds to windward?" inquired Brenton, pointing toward sulphurous masses gathering in that direction. "It looks like heavy weather in my opinion."

"Yes," answered Boom. "I think we are going to have a heavy blow."

Nevertheless, he resolved to carry sail as long as possible, to give the pursuing pirates, who were much slower in point of sailing than Bondo's craft, had been—a wide berth.

Meanwhile the clouds gathered thicker and darker every moment, while a line of white water, seeming to extend from horizon to horizon to windward, betokened the strength of the approaching tempest.

"Hands by the halliards, in with the royals and top-gallant sails," shouted Boom. "Stand by to furl topsails!"

The active seamen sprang to obey.

Royals and top-gallant sails soon were furled, and now came the order to clew up and furl topsails.

The fore and mizen were upon the yards, and the men were about passing the gaskets when the gale, in all its fury, burst upon the ship.

So tremendous was its force that it threw the craft down on her beam ends, and sent her flying through the storm-tossed waters like a thunderbolt.

The sails, which, as stated, had been hauled upon the yards, were blown from the grasp of the seamen, and, slatting furiously, flew backward and forward with the din of musketry volleys.

"Down! down for your lives, and let sails go! You can do nothing with them now!" shouted the captain.

The men endeavoured to obey, but, while they were striving to "lay-in," the ship, caught by a tremendous sea, was hurled up—and still upward, until her bottom seemed to pierce the very clouds.

Then down she came with a long, sidelong sweep and lurch, giving herself at the same time a powerful jerk, which it was impossible for the men aloft to withstand.

Every soul of them, except one poor lad, was



[FAITH AT THE HELM.]

thrown from the yard into the boiling, roaring sea, in which they were soon swallowed by the whirlpool of contending waters.

The lad of whom mention has been made had been thrown from the yard, but had somehow contrived to clutch the footrope, to which he now clung desperately.

It was a fearful situation, for at one moment he was swung far out over the stormy ocean, and the next almost flung headlong over the footrope.

Brenton, seizing a coil of rope lying on deck, flung it over his shoulders, and at once ran aloft, determined either to save the lad or perish in the attempt. "You can do nothing, sir," cried the captain; "you will only lose your own life."

Brenton, however, making no answer, moved straight on, and had soon gained the topmast rigging.

To this he quickly lashed himself with one end of the rope, then, making a bowline hitch in the other end, he threw it dextrously.

The force of the gale, however, causing it to pass beyond the lad, it was of no service to him.

Brenton then loosened the part of the rope holding him to the rigging, and at once made his way out on the footrope.

Having gained a position above the boy, he stooped, and, taking advantage of a momentary pause in the violent motions of the ship, which was just then caught in a trough of the sea, he seized the lad under the armpits with one hand, and, holding on the yard with the other, drew him, by one single effort of strength, straight up on the footrope.

"Lay in now! lay in fast, my boy," cried Brenton, ere the poor youth could find time to stammer forth his thanks.

The lad obeyed, gaining the deck a little before Brenton, who had given him the precedence.

It was well they gained the deck when they did, for a moment later the vessel, making another tremendous plunge, with her topsails all flying to tatters, her main-yard broke, the two fragments falling apart.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Faith, who had been watching Brenton's perilous manœuvres with the utmost anxiety, "thank Heaven you are safe!"

"I am glad I saved that little fellow," said Brenton.

"You did what no other man would have dared to do," said Faith, admiringly.

Just then one of the fragments of the yard flying clear, the spar passed in its fall so near the parties on the quarter-deck that one end struck Brenton on the head, knocking him senseless to the deck.

The officers, followed by Faith, conveyed him into the cabin and laid him on a bunk, where he soon recovered, though evidently with the temporary loss of his senses.

"Where is she?" he exclaimed, starting up, his eyes glaring; "they shall not take her away! The savages shall not snatch her from me!"

Faith, who had been left to tend him while the officers were on deck, sat holding one of his hands in both her own.

"Compose yourself," said she, in a soft, tender voice, which at once seemed to have a quieting effect on Brenton; "it will be better for you if you do."

Brenton fixed his gaze upon her.

"So they have not taken you away?" he said, a calmer expression lighting his eyes.

"No, they have not taken me away," she answered, gently smoothing his brow and hair.

"I am glad of that," he answered, "as I could not be happy without you."

Her eyes beamed with pleasure; a soft glow suffused her cheeks.

He watched her for a moment, his whole face expressive of quiet satisfaction, then he sank back, soon dropping into a profound slumber.

The gale was still in its fury, the ship rolling and pitching violently, with everything creaking and straining. Still Faith sat there by the bunk, watching Brenton with untiring zeal, her eyes like stars, her cheeks rosy with love and tenderness.

Suddenly she felt the ship going far over; the next moment she heard a heavy crash, as a sea struck the vessel, followed by the roaring of the water as it furiously swept the decks.

Then there was a wild sort of shriek from on deck, and a cry in a boyish voice of "Man overboard!"

Ere Faith could leave her place the boy whom Brenton had rescued came staggering down into the cabin, with wild, staring eyeballs and ghastly face.

"Gone, gone," he murmured. "All gone!"

"Who do you mean?" inquired Faith.

"The officers—everybody," answered the lad. "They and the man at the wheel have been washed away. Nobody left aboard now but you and I and the injured man."

"Stay here and watch carefully!" said Faith, springing up, her whole face aglow with resolution. "There must be somebody at the wheel."

"I do not know how to steer in such a blow," gasped the boy, "as I'm not used to it. Oh, what will become of us?"

"Stay here!" repeated Faith; "and I will take the wheel."

"You?" inquired the lad, who was ignorant of Faith's skill in nautical affairs. "What can you do?"

"You shall see," she answered, quietly.

Then she mounted to the deck, and, seizing the wheel, kept the vessel's head to the sea as well as she could in such a blow.

The scene on deck and all around the storm-struck craft was indeed terrific.

The naked yards and masts were bending before the force of the blast like stalks of corn, and looked, every moment, as if they must soon give way.

The hull was rolling and pitching violently, now tossed apparently to the clouds, and now descending far down into some watery valley.

Meanwhile all around the vessel the spray flew in clouds, shrouding the craft in a white, fleecy veil of flying articles, which were whirled round and round in air.

Fore and aft flew the spray, almost blinding Faith's sight as she stood there at the wheel—the only person on deck.

But her cheek did not blanch nor her eyes quail, for she was fighting with the storm for one who had become suddenly and strangely dear to her—the wounded seaman in the bunk below.

For his sake she would, woman-like, have faced any peril, and now with skilful hand she held the wheel, and fearlessly faced that terrific storm.

All around her, as she thus stood, swept the angry spray, and now and then a heavy sea came crashing inboard, fortunately thus far leaving her unharmed.

Guided by her, the stout craft, though creaking and complaining in every timber, steadily rolled along on her course, her whistling shrouds and drenched topsails yards almost drinking the foaming waves.

Bravely and unshrinkingly she guided the vessel on her perilous way for many hours, mustering all her strength, which was severely tried, to maintain her station at the helm.

At last the gale blew with less violence, and, the heavens clearing in the West, the storm showed signs of abating.

With eager interest Faith noticed the aspect of the weather, and when at last a ray of bright sunlight, streaming down through an opening in the clouds, lighted her beautiful brown hair, a smile as bright as the golden effulgence broke over her face.

"At last," she muttered, half turning and bending backward, her lithe person swayed towards the cabin-door, betokening that she was thinking of the sufferer below. "I can now spare a moment to go to him."

(To be continued.)



[WITH THE TIDE.]

MAURICE DURANT.

CHAPTER XXXI.

This is the fairy promise of a happier time.

BEFORE half an hour had passed the news had spread that the unknown artist of the great pictures the world had been marvelling at for the last ten years had suddenly come to light, and was in the room, and speedily the countess and my Lord Crownbrilliant were besieged by eager requests for an introduction, while the uninitiated were trying to get out of the confusion which his two names threw their minds into.

How could Lucian, the painter and musician, be the Reverend Maurice Durant, the Rector of Grassmere? Lady Crownbrilliant could give her numerous inquirers no information. She had only known Maurice Durant as Maurice Durant, and until the discovery had been made by a great traveller and art patron in the room had not been aware of his identity. Neither could she satisfy her friends with an introduction, for Maurice Durant, or Lucian, could not be found.

But when the excitement and curiosity had somewhat ceased the curtains on the balcony were thrown aside, and he appeared with Lady Mildred and Maud on either arm.

Of course he was surrounded at once, but, recluse as they thought him, he showed by his ready wit and the ease with which he disengaged himself from the crowd without giving offence, a knowledge of the world and its tactics that startled and surprised Lady Mildred.

Several artists who recognized him as the silent painter at Venice came forward and shook hands, and asked eagerly of his adventures and his whereabouts, but he parried their questions with some light answer and a winning smile, and at last made his way to the hall.

As he stood bareheaded beside the carriage door, helping Lady Mildred and Maud to enter, a dark figure stepped from beneath the laurels and stood observing him.

When the carriage had rolled away the dark Italian face of the watcher lit up with a sardonic smile, and the red lips murmured:

"Soh, soh; all goes merry as a marriage bell! Oh, my Lucian, I have thee beautifully! Well shalt thou pay for thy shot and my riddled arm. Beautifully! Beautifully!"

On their way to Grosvenor Square Lady Mildred sat staring at him as if he had been a spectre, occasionally dropping her eyes to Maud's happy, dreamy

face and her hand, which lay tightly clasped in the strong one of Maurice Durant's, and it was not until they had arrived home and found Sir Fielding still up and reading in the drawing-room that she recovered her presence of mind.

To say that Sir Fielding was surprised is to give his astonishment a mild name.

"Maurice Durant!" he exclaimed, too startled to hold out his hand, but recovering quickly enough to grasp the one held out to him.

"Ay, Maurice Durant, Sir Fielding! I do not wonder at your surprise. A bear in damask dancing at a fair is not a stranger sight than Maurice Durant in ball costume. Your eyes ask for an explanation. I will give you one to-morrow—to-day rather—your timepiece strikes three," and a light, happy smile broke over his grand face.

Sir Fielding looked first at Maud and then at him again, for his joyous smile was reflected in her lovely, blushing face.

"But—but—"

"Ah, Sir Fielding!" exclaimed Maurice Durant, laying his hand upon Sir Fielding's shoulder. "Give me till the sun has risen. Ask me to dine with you—tell me I am welcome to your house, your home, your—"

He stopped, sent one glance from his dark eyes at the motionless form of Maud, and then went on, quickly:

"For I am free to accept! Free! Free! Free!" he repeated, throwing up his hands and shaking his mass of brown hair with a laugh that rang through the room. "Free! You, Sir Fielding, see the word makes four letters, and means—well, free! At liberty. To me it means all the universe—life! happiness! love! Bah! I am talking enigmas. Give me till sunrise—till dinner-time, and then—"

Sir Fielding looked at Lady Mildred, but she threw up her hands and shook her head. He looked at Maud, and she quivered, flushed, burst into tears and sprang to his heart. Maurice Durant drew himself to his full height and smiled—ah, what a smile!

"Sir Fielding," he cried, "you hold against your breast the rarest gem that Heaven ever gave to earth—the sweetest jewel that shall ever deck its throne! I come a few hours later to ask you to give me your gem—your precious jewel. Until then let her rest upon your breast as, if Heaven's mercy goeth so far, she shall evermore rest on mine."

Then he strode forward, bent his head till the lips touched Maud's tiny hand, and, with a regal bow to Sir Fielding and Lady Mildred, was gone, Maud at the same moment tearing herself from her astounded father's arms and flying to her own room.

"What, in the name of Heaven, does all this mean, Mildred?" asked Sir Fielding, sinking into a chair.

"Don't ask me, Fielding," replied Lady Mildred, breathlessly. "I don't know. Did you ever see such a change in your life? He looks five years younger, and quite another man. You should have seen him at the countess's; the whole room was in an uproar. Everybody knew him, or wanted to know him."

"What!" said Sir Fielding, getting more puzzled every moment.

"Yes," went on Lady Mildred. "He came into the room about two o'clock, looking like a prince, his long hair brushed off his face, which is a remarkable one, is it not? He came in alone, no one with him, and caught sight of me as I sat beside a window for the air. I didn't know him scarcely, he looked so much thinner. He's been ill, very ill, I can see. Besides, I couldn't believe my senses. Fancy what you would have thought yourself, Fielding, if you had seen him enter a room quite suddenly, dressed as he is to-night, and looking so happy and different to what he used to be. Well, he left me all of a maze, and I saw him go up to Carlotta. Directly after that some one in the room recognized him as the painter of those pictures you've been wondering about so much, and immediately a crowd—you know how they throng round one, Fielding—surrounded him. Well, I lost sight of him, and, getting over my astonishment—it really upset me—I began to look for Maudie. Couldn't find her anywhere! Oh, dear me! I hunted everywhere, that dear creature the Countess Fondimere too; but no, she wasn't to be found. At last, in a corner of the terrace, I came upon Maurice Durant with Maudie lying upon his breast. You might have knocked me down with a feather, Fielding," and Lady Mildred began to cry with excitement. "I went up to him, but before I could say a word he looked up calm and cool, with that lifting of the eyebrows he always had, and said: 'Looking for your flower, Lady Mildred? Here it is, safe, sound, and lovely as ever,' and his voice sounded so beautiful with that charming foreign ring in it. Well, what could I do? Maud wouldn't say a word, and he was calm and cool, only very happy, as—well, you know; and then, before I knew where we were almost, he had made his way out of the room, got the carriage, and here we were."

"Heaven bless me!" said Sir Fielding. "Heaven bless me. Is it possible that—"

"What?" said Lady Fielding.

"That I'm going to bed, my dear Mildred," said he, and with a smile upon his puzzled face he retreated.

CHAPTER XXXII.

This story will be better still untold.

Butler.

DINNER was over. Sir Fielding looked at Maurice Durant and then at Chudleigh, who rose and muttered something; but Maurice Durant, who was quick of eye, smiled and laid his hand on Chudleigh's arm.

"No, no, Sir Fielding; Mr. Chichester is one of us, and has more than a right to stay. Sit down again, I pray."

So Chudleigh sat down, and Sir Fielding uneasily handed the bottle.

At the time Maurice Durant was the only one calm.

Lifting his glass to his lips, he sipped it, then commenced, the Italian accent in his earnest voice, at first very faint and hardly distinguishable, but gradually becoming stronger as he proceeded, and giving his last words a music inexpressibly subtle and touching.

"Sir Fielding, last night, or rather this morning, I promised to explain to you the strange change in my manner, and the scene that occurred at the Countess Crownbrilliant's last night. They have in Italy a proverb which says, Do naught before sleep. I have slept, and in my sleep have changed my mind. With your gracious permission I will not confess—for confession it would be—the wrongs of my life, which bound me hand and foot by a chain whose links were eating into my soul when I last saw you. Ah, Sir Fielding, Mr. Chichester, you have spent your lives free from sin—from shame. I thank you. Enough. Let me tell you that my past life has been cursed by one error—one sin. Since the day I left the old Rectory, light-hearted and glad (here his voice got low and broken), "my father—peace be to his soul in death, I brought him none in life—fond and proud, I have not known till one night in this last November one happy day. I have travelled the world to and fro—sometimes like a prince, sometimes with the poverty and hardship of a priest. I have painted in prisons in *la belle France* and in the hovels of Bohemia—ridden on the boulevards, hunted on the prairies, and starved in the bush, in one vain endeavour to forget, to fly from the curse which hung over me till that blessed night in November when Heaven sent, amidst the wind and the rain, an angel in woman's form to lift it from my soul. Why should I give you the history of that curse? Why should I rake up the ashes of my pain, dig from the grave the secret that has been buried for years? To no purpose, to no avail. Enough that it is expiated for, that I hold the proof of its death and burial, of its eternal ending, on a slip of paper against my breast. Enough that the chains that bound me, the despair that made me a prisoner weary of life, a man more like a heartless, silent brute than aught else, have fallen from me for ever, and that, redeemed, freed, emancipated, I come to ask of you your child."

"I would have come before, but the flower, the sudden joy, the rainbow—a frame which I, the owner, would have pledged it to withstand. I have been ill, delirious, mad, what you will, for months. Chances so heavy, and so long worn could not be given without a shock."

"But I am myself again—myself, do I say?—a thousand times better, stronger, happier than the Maurice of old, dying to pour out my love for your sweet child—my angel Maud."

"Sir Fielding, it would be false modesty were I to tell you that I know not if I hold your daughter's heart. I know—and Heaven knows how I glory in the knowledge—that she giveth me love for love. Take heed how you refuse. By Heaven! I will not answer for myself—I have been hardly tried, Sir Fielding—if you should say me nay."

Here his voice grew broken again, and his hand, as it rested on the table, shook visibly.

Sir Fielding drew his hand across his eyes, but could not speak.

Maurice Durant, in a lower voice, went on.

"Think me not forgetful of my respect to you—her father. There are matters which soil love's feathers if they do but light upon them. Gold turns black against a pure love; but gold must be spoken of, so I hasten to tell you that there is enough, and more than enough, to satisfy a father than yourself."

"Think not," he added, with a flash of his eyes, and a gesture that actually made Sir Fielding tremble, "that I would buy my blood. Were I poor as a saint I would ask her of you. No, Sir Fielding. Gold to those who love the dross, for as let us shun it."

Sir Fielding flushed.

"Another word would have wounded me," he murmured.

"Therefore I said it not," said Maurice Durant, leaving over and grasping his hand, while he let the other fall on Chudleigh's shoulder.

"Come, Sir Fielding, give me the right to call Maud my wife and yourself my father!"

Sir Fielding pressed his hand, and mastering his emotion muttered:

"Take her, Maurice Durant. Of the past, so that it be vanished, I wish to know nothing; of the future, it is in your care."

"Nay!" cried Maurice Durant, rising with a reverent look upon his face. "But in Heaven's."

"You love me, my darling?" rang out the low words as the beautiful girl nestled against his heart in the soft firelight. "You love me?"

"Could I live if I did not?" she breathed back, tenderly.

"And you do not fear me?" asked he, a slight shade flitting across his brow.

"Not more than I ought," was the reply as the loving eyes filled with tears. "I cannot but look up as the flowers raise their heads to the sun—not with pride, but with loving humility. You are my king! Speak, I obey; smile, and I love; frown, and I die; but smile or frown I love you—I love you always and for ever."

The dark eyes above her were filled with tears—the first that had shone there for many a long year.

"My darling, my race, my god. Heaven is too good to me."

"No, no," she murmured.

Then, pressing her to his breast, he walked slowly to the piano, and, sitting down, poured out his heart in a burst of grand music that seemed to the gentle girl leaning on his shoulder to the born indeed of Heaven and its angelic choir.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hand.

Every moment, lightly shakes, ran itself in golden sand.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;

Smote the chord of Selfishness, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

Two or three days later the morning papers inserted a large paragraph, and in one or two cases indulged in a leading article, on the mysterious and romantic appearance of the artist and musician whose works had for the last five years been the subject of universal admiration, and one paper more daring than the others, launched out into a complete and florid sketch of the great genius's life, not a single particular, excepting those of his appearance at the ball and his being the Rector of Grassmere, of which was true.

Maurice Durant when shown these articles and paragraphs laughed, heartily—he would have sneered a few months ago—but Maud ever inexpressibly proud of them, though not at all surprised at the fire from which her grand lover had made, for she had always held him to be something high and noble, and it was but the fulfilment of her expectations.

Invitations flowed in thick and fast upon Maurice Durant, but he refused them one and all. Though he had entered the world again it was with no love for it. He had left his quiet retreat to claim his prize, and was now anxious to return—not to the old life of solitude—but to Grassmere.

Accordingly in June the Chichesters, with the exception of Chudleigh, who remained in town, returned to the Hall with Maurice Durant as guest.

The joy of that first day at the old Hall who shall describe?

Maud leaning on her lover's arm felt herself inclined to weep for relief as she heard his joyous voice and grand, ringing laugh so different to the grim smile and deep, hard tones of old.

"Maurice," she said after dinner, blushing shyly as she spoke his name, "I have a surprise for you. Will you come with me?"

"Come with you? Anywhere, my darling. Whither are you going?"

"You mustn't ask," she said, stroking his head.

"Come!"

Maurice Durant caught up his soft sombrero and took her hand.

"See," he said, "as a child I want to be led."

She, entering into his spirit, laughed softly, and took his hand.

So they passed on to the terrace and into the garden.

"A surprise in the open air, little one?" he said.

She nodded and smiled.

"No, not quite."

And then led him to a little summer house, built in the shape of an Indian temple. Its erection had been a whim of Sir Fielding, who had thought to use it for a study in the summer, but it had never fulfilled its purpose—the bookworm feeling himself unable to leave his beloved library.

Stopping at the little carved door, Maud took a key from her pocket and opened it.

"Walk in," she said.

And Maurice, at one stride clearing the white threshold, entered, and saw a beautiful little apartment furnished with old-fashioned carved oak and lined with pictures and models.

In one corner stood an easel, in the other a suit of mail. On the massive antique table were placed palettes, maulsticks, and brushes, and in the centre a beautiful vase, containing fresh-cut flowers.

The painter uttered a cry of delight and clasped the beautiful plotter in his arms.

"My thoughtful darling," he cried.

"Are you pleased?" she asked, smiling up into his face.

"Pleased! I am delighted. It is a studio worthy of a prince."

"And are you not a prince?" she said.

He laughed.

"You are mine," she said, simply. "But, Maurice—"

And she stopped.

"Speak on, dear mine," he said, tenderly, stroking her beautiful hair. "Speak on—"

"You will—will it disturb you if sometimes I come and peep in—some and sit sometimes, for a minute—only a minute—"

"Come always, or be assured even this pretty place will be unable to hold me long. Come and sit there in the light while I work, getting inspiration and fire from your beautiful eyes. Ah! my darling, my darling! How sweet—how beautiful thou hast made life for me! See, I feel that I could paint heaven and the angels when I look within your pure eyes, hear your sweet, loving voice."

And he held her fast in his hands, and gazed down into the clear depths of her dark orbs.

"And I—oh, you can tell what you feel, my prince, but I am stupid and ignorant, and can find no words to tell of the joy and happiness that thrill through me at the touch of your dear hands—see how I love to kiss them—the sound of your beautiful voice. Oh, Maurice, Maurice, I lay awake at night and wonder if it is all a dream, if it can be possible and real that you, so great, so clever, so grandly above all other men, can stoop to think—much less love—so insignificant a being as I."

His eyes grew dim and his voice too low for her to hear as he murmured:

"Can so sweet a flower bear the light and the winds, the sun and the rain? Oh, Heaven, keep and temper thy mercy towards her."

Then aloud:

"My sweet Maud, 'tis well thou dost not know the story of the past! Then wouldst think me no prince save the prince of sinners."

"More sinned against than sinning," she replied, quickly.

"Thinkest thou so?" he said, musing. "Ay! ay!"

Then with his arm round her, they strolled down to the river's bank, the birds' songs suddenly fraught with a new sweet meaning, the stream ripple thrilling with a new song.

"Where is the boat, my darling?" he said.

"On the other side, I think," she said. "Are you going to take me for a row?"

He nodded and glanced up and down for some means of reaching the other side.

"The bridge?" he asked.

"Is a mile down the stream," she replied.

"Then we must make one," he said, lightly; and with a suddenness that made her start he sprang at the branch of a tree which hung over the stream, and, clutching it with a grasp of iron, went along it hand over hand until he could drop on the opposite bank.

Maud stared with astonished admiration.

It was the feat of a giant, yet he seemed to do it as easily as walking across a room.

"Are you not hurt?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Hurt, my darling?" he said, laughing. "No, why should I be? Stay thou there till I bring the boat," and he strode away.

In a few moments Maud saw him standing up in the old-fashioned boat, propelling it gondolier fashion with a speed and grace that charmed her.

"Canst thou do everything?" she said as he leapt to her side, using his "thou" which sounded so sweetly in her ear.

He laughed, and, sweeping the dust from the seat with his handkerchief, picked her up in his arms like a child and put her on a little dainty seat of cushions.

"Now we will go swiftly," he said as the boat darted from the shore.

"And you will sing?"

"And I will sing," he said, and with that he commenced a soft, sweet melody set to an Italian love song that chimed in with every stroke of the single oar and every movement of his strong, graceful form.

So they went down the stream, thinking earth a Paradise which their love had turned to Heaven.

Day followed day like one sweet dream, apoth-

Maurice Durant had become the idol of the place, his exploits, his daring, his genius, the talk of the county and the admiration and wonder of Grassmere.

He rode as no one else could ride save an Arab or a Mexican hunter, so said the gentlemen. He painted with the brush of a Rubens or a Vandyke declared the art authorities. He shot like a fur-trapper or a rifle-ranger, said the sportsmen; and all agreed that his voice was the sweetest they had ever heard.

His manner too had a certain charm about it that no one could resist, it was tinged with equanimity yet mellowed with a softness peculiarly his own.

Equipped with such manly and graceful attributes, it was scarcely a matter of surprise that the strange being whose past life was still a profound mystery should be sought after and made an idol of. He refused few invitations, going with Maud almost everywhere, always ready to talk in his soft, musical accents of strange sights and incidents which his own eyes had witnessed, always yielding with a gracious smile to their request that he would play and sing, leaving the drawing-room for the smoking-room to find the men as eager to admire and applaud him as the women.

The summer was a dream of happiness to Maud. At night she scarcely slept for joy; the day seemed to fly past on the wings of love and happiness.

Sir Fielding, relieved of his load of anxiety concerning the estate, was serenely happy in his library and the knowledge of his darling's glances, and felt that his lines had fallen in pleasant places in the twilight of his departing days.

So shines the sun and murmur the gentle breezes in the calm before a storm.

In August, Lord and Lady Crownbrilliant returned to the Retreat, and Chudleigh took up his quarters at the Hall.

His appearance scarcely harmonized with the general aspect of happiness, for he was looking pale and worn, and what was worse, restless and unhappy.

Maurice Durant, who drove Maud over to the Retreat in a tiny little carriage drawn by a pair of queer Arabian ponies—his own gift—noticed the same expression on the beautiful face of Lady Crownbrilliant, and grew grave and silent, for his keen eyes read their secret in a glance.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Tempted himself, thus tempter too. Prior.

"WHAT I say is this," began Lord Crownbrilliant, polishing his wine-glass in mid air, and looking over at her ladyship with a stolid, would-be severe stare in his glass-framed eyes. "I say that it's not becoming of the Countess of Crownbrilliant to interfere with a such things."

The countess raised her eyebrows and shot a cold, imperial glance from her dark eyes at his fair, foppish face.

"D-do you hear me?" he snapped, angered by her silence.

"I heard you," she said, simply.

"Then why d-don't you answer?"

"I have nothing or little to say. I say but cannot argue."

"Very unlike your sex usually," sneered his lordship, sticking his fork into the saloon violently.

Then, after eating in a disagreeable, peevish sort of way that was particularly unpleasant to witness, he commenced again, in a mocking, sneering tone:

"F-flower shows!—widowhood. W-what next? W-what next? d-don't the p-people want with flower-shows? It's all d-don't d-don't and I w-wouldn't have you mixing yourself up in it."

Still not a word—the eyes fixed upon the plate, the white-gloved hands toying with the carved handle of the silver-knife.

"I know where you got it from—it's one of C-Chichester's c-confounded stupid notions. I—I tell you what it is, my lady, you're a deal too thick with—"

"My lord!" she said, at last, with flashing eyes and heaving bosom.

"D-don't shriek at me like that. I w-won't stand it," snapped Lord Crownbrilliant. "It's true, and you know it. He's always here. I'm perfectly sick of seeing him. Besides, you ought to know your position better than to encourage another man who was known to have been a sweet upon you."

The countess rose white and majestic.

"You remind me of my position, my lord; give me leave to retire or I may forget it as you forget yours."

His lordship, delighted at the anger he had at last aroused, coolly sipped his wine and grinned.

"My p-position. I can't very well forget it, not having had a very much worse, my lady. Now you—"

But she had gone, her long silken dress rustling behind her like a snake, and his lordship with a cunning grin refilled his glass.

"'Twould as she is I'll bring her under you. As for C-Chichester, I'll stop his little game with a s-snap of my fingers."

Two hours later Carlotta, Countess Crownbrilliant, saw from her dim corner at the window of her own room, the stalwart figure of Chudleigh Chichester cantering his favourite mare up the carriage drive.

Her heart beat thick and fast and she rose trembling.

If they met, with her husband in his present mood, what might not be the consequences?

She knew the weak, aggravating, childish, peevishness of the man who owned her, and she knew also the quick, hot temper of the man who loved her, heated and strained to its extreme tension by that very love.

Ringling the bell with a quivering hand, she bade her maid show Mr. Chichester into the drawing-room, and, hastily bathing her tear-swollen eyes, stole down the stairs.

The smile that always lighted up Chudleigh's face sprang to his eyes as she entered, and held out her hand, but it gave place to a heavy frown as he murmured:

"Crying again? No denial, Carlotta; you cannot hide it. You forget I know every expression of your face as a priest knows his misal. What has happened? Has he—"

"Oh, Chudleigh, Chudleigh," she breathed, "let go my hand. You—you must not come here again—you must not. See—oh, Heavens do not look so! Oh, Chudleigh, Heaven forgive me—but—Love you so—"

And the unhappy woman hid her face in his hands.

"Heaven forgive you, my darling," he murmured.

"How have you sinned, save in giving yourself to this—this man? And Heaven has forgiven you that long since. Oh, Carlotta, if—"

"Hush! What was that?" she cried, starting and clutching his arm as a crash came from the dining-room.

"Is he there?" asked Chudleigh, in a whisper.

She nodded.

"Let us go to him—he may come here, and—"

Chudleigh opened the door and followed her into the hall.

Entering the dining-room, they saw that his lordship had fallen asleep across the table, having knocked down and broken a couple of glasses in his descent.

Carlotta shuddered, and Chudleigh's face grew awful in its contempt.

It was too fearful, this looking helplessly on at the spectacle of the man who had married the woman he loved lying drunk across the dinner-table.

"Come away," he whispered, turning to the door with Carlotta on his arm.

But the rustle of her dress awoke his lordship, who started to his feet and, with bloodshot eyes, stared drunkenly at Chudleigh.

"Hallo, C-Chichester," he hiccupped, "you're here again, hic, are you?" "I thought I told you," answering round with half-closed eyes to the shrinking Carlotta. "I thought I, hic, told you that I wouldn't have my f-fine gentleman here again, eh?"

Then what the deuce—I say what the deuce does he do here? I'm the master of my own house, I'm your h-husband, I'm—"

Rambling away into a string of incoherencies, he fell into the chair again, sweeping a fresh lot of glass from the table with his helpless arm.

Chudleigh strode to the bell, his face whiter and his teeth clenched.

"Tell his lordship's valet to come here at once," he said to the servant, and, closing the door upon the drunken peer, he led the trembling Carlotta to the drawing-room. Then as she sank upon a couch he fell on his knees beside her and seizing her hand said, in a hurried, tremulous whisper:

"My darling Carlotta, I cannot—you cannot bear it longer. It would be cruel, it would be wicked to leave you in his power. Carlotta, we must fly—fly to some distant land! Oh, my darling, do not hesitate. Tomorrow night I will have a post-chaise at the end of the lane; we will start from the Warrington Station and reach Paris in a few hours. From Paris we will go to Italy—Italy—think, my darling. Oh, Carlotta, say yes. Stay! do not speak, place your hand in mine. Ah, you will come, away from suffering, darling. Leave all to me. Leave all to me, my own, my own!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

Our wills and fates do so contrary run

That our devices still are overthrown.

Such an act makes marriage vows

As false as dice or oaths.

So let him rest, his faults lie gently on him.

Shakespeare.

THE following morning Maurice Durant, on his way to the Rectory, which an army of workmen were making habitable, met Chudleigh riding at full gallop in the direction of the Hall, looking flurried and heated.

He pulled up as he saw Maurice, and said:

"Going to the Rectory?"

"Yes. And you?" answered Maurice Durant, fixing him with his keen dark eyes.

"To the Hall," replied Chudleigh. "I have just come from Warrington, where I heard news that will necessitate my immediate return to town."

As he said it his eyes dropped before Maurice's searching ones, and the keen observer, used to reading men's faces at a glance, saw that something was wrong.

"Indeed!" he said. "Some of your politics going wrong? Your party in danger?"

"No—that is, yes," said Chudleigh, with some little confusion.

Maurice walked up to the mare, and, putting it with his strong white hand, said significantly, looking straight up into the younger man's downcast eyes:

"Be careful, my friend; take the advice of one who has suffered severely from his own errors, and shun the first one."

Chudleigh started, but could not meet the earnest eyes.

"Eh, what?" he said, brokenly. "Oh, yes—yes—yes. I must be going—I'll be back again," and started off at a sharp trot, which, before the silent, motionless figure looking at him had lost sight of him, had passed into the old break-neck gallop.

Sir Fielding asked no embarrassing questions when informed that Chudleigh must proceed to town at once, and gave him the sum of money he wanted without a moment's hesitation, so that Chudleigh found everything clear and easy, and felt perfectly secure against detection and pursuit as he walked into the stables and told his groom to harness the best pair to a light brougham at ten o'clock; but as a further precaution beckoned the man aside and told him with a significant look that he need not mention the orders he had received.

"Very good, sir," replied the intelligent servant.

"What time did you say, sir?"

"Ten o'clock. In time to catch the half-past nine from Warrington. And, by the way, George, you may as well drive, it is rather late for old William, and—you understand?"

"Quite so," replied the groom, torching his hat.

"You'll find me all right, sir, when shall I take 'em?"

"At the end of the Park. I will tell you where to drive when I see you."

The day, taken up with preparation for the flight, passed with tolerable speed to Chudleigh; to the woman who was about to resign herself to her position to his hands the hours lagged feebly.

All night long right and wrong had been battling within her. One hour she had determined to take the faithful step and fly with the man she loved better than the whole world and her own soul, the next her better feelings got the upper hand, and, melted into tears and racked with sob, she resolved to stay with the man she hated with a hatred that grew each day.

In the morning she arose white and wearied, and found his lordship seated in the breakfast-room, looking as yellow as a guinea, with black marks under his eyes, and hands that shook the paper they clutched nervelessly.

Without a word she sat down at the table and poured out some coffee, without a word he stretched forward and took a cup, upsetting some of its contents over the magnificent carpet.

"Why do you fill the cup so full?" he snapped.

"And what made you s-so late?"

"I was tired," she said, in tones of ice.

"T-tired!" he said, with a sneer. "W-what with? N-not had work. W-what the deuce should make you tired?"

She turned her face so that it came within the shadow of the curtain, and made no answer.

Presently his lordship uttered an oath, and dropped the paper on the ground.

"Nowhere!" he stammered, his face crimson and his fingers twitching. "Redcap nowhere. Why, she was p-wine, f-favourite yesterday. Nowhere! Phew! There's a two thousand g-guineas gone! But what do you care?" he snapped, turning with a jerk to the silent, beautiful figure. "You don't care whether I win or lose. Y-you're a pretty wife, y-you are! Why don't you answer me?"

"I have nothing to say," replied Carlotta, with simple scorn. "Besides, your lordship forgets that you have not asked me a question."

"Asked you a question! Of course I haven't; but I s-suppose you don't mean to keep a silence until I do!"

Carlotta made no reply. And stung by the scorn of her dark eyes the weak-brained, malicious idiot caught up the paper and flung it full in her regal face.

She sprang to her feet at the outrage, and for the moment he thought she was about to strike him; but,

Instead, she stooped, and picking up the paper calmly placed it on the table, saying, with a strange smile: "Did I not know that this was the last insult your lordship would offer me, I could not bear it."

"Oh, you've s-spoken at l-last, have you?" he sneered. "I th-thought that would move you. And now I don't know what you mean, and I d-don't care."

And rising from the chair he walked to the window and called to a man to get a dog-cart ready. "The cob, your lordship?" asked the man, touching his cap respectfully.

"Of c-course, idiot," returned his lordship, savagely, "and get weedy to come with me to the steeplechase at Brockton. I shall s-start in an hour."

And with a scowl at his wife he lounged out.

Carlotta drank a cup of coffee, and then returned to her room.

Her face was calm and set, her mind determined. The last insult had been the one which had broken the back of her patience.

Locking the door, she leisurely packed a small portmanteau with the clothes she had owned at her marriage, unlocked her jewel cases, and took from them the few trinkets that she had worn in her maidenhood, and those that had been presents to her from Lady Mildred, and all others excepting her husband's.

His gifts and the Crownbrilliant diamonds she set aside in their cases, and, placing them on her dressing-table, laid this note, together with the keys, on the top:

"LORD CROWNBRILLIANTS.—Before you have read this I shall have left you for ever, and be miles away from the misery your presence inflicts. Heaven knows when I married you I intended being a faithful and, if possible, a loving wife. I have striven to carry out my resolution. But you would not have it so. Your temporary passion, I might more truthfully say your whim, your fancy, soon vanished, and you soon proved by your conduct, your words, nay, your very looks, that you had grown to hate and despise me. From your hate, contempt, and insult I have been compelled to fly. May Heaven lay the sin, if sin it be, to your charge, not to mine, who am driven to it by your cruelty."

"CARLOTTA."

"You will see that with the name you gave me on our marriage day I have left every article which I, as your wife, possessed. One favour I have to ask, and, being the last my lips or pen will ever beg of you, I have some hopes of your granting it; it is that you will not attempt to follow me. Pursuit is useless. I would rather die than see your face again."

Having written this, she, woman-like, burst into tears. But her proud spirit was too wounded to draw back, and with a trembling hand she folded it, placed it in an envelope, which, directing it "Lord Crownbrilliant," she laid on the top of the jewel case, and then, throwing herself upon the bed, which never more was to receive her beautiful form, she tried to sleep, for she knew that when the night came she would require all the strength of mind and body she could command.

Seven o'clock came, and dinner was announced. Hastily dressing to prevent any suspicion, she glided downstairs and found that Lord Crownbrilliant had not returned.

She waited half an hour, then went through the pretence of partaking of the costly viands laid out for her, and, feeling ready to choke at every mouthful, swallowed some soup and ate the wing of a chicken.

Before she finished a footman entered and handed her a note on a silver salver.

The address was in Chudleigh's handwriting, and with palpitating heart though with a calm face she slowly tore the envelope open.

The note ran thus:

"MY DARLING.—All is going well. At half-past ten meet me at the bottom of the rose garden, and leave all the rest in my hands. Be firm."

"Ever your own CHUDLEIGH."

With trembling fingers she put the note in her pocket and sipped a little wine, then, telling her maid that she did not wish to be disturbed, stole up to her room again.

Once more the battle within her breast commenced, but a glance at the beloved name at the foot of the note weighed down the balance of evil, and, nerving herself to the task, she slowly removed the magnificent evening dress and put on some dark travelling clothes.

Then she sat down in the shadow of the room to wait with tightly clasped hands the striking of the hours.

Eight! nine! ten!

She arose, and, striving to still the tumultuous beating of her heart by pressing her white hand against her side, opened the door and stole on to the corridor.

At the foot of the stairs she met her maid, who stared at the dark clothes and stood respectfully aside.

"I am going to walk in the garden, Parker," she said. "I may go as far as the town tell his lordship when he returns."

"Very good, my lady," said the woman, and the trembling girl glided on.

Once in the garden she breathed a sigh of relief. Not a soul was in sight. She saw the smoke from the gardener's cottage in the distance, saw the light in the bedrooms of the house behind, heard the barking of a dog in the stables with a dead, dreamy feeling of unreality, and still glided on.

The rose garden! She stopped, and clenching her teeth stood for a moment white and deathlike. Before she recovered herself a man's form leapt from the shadow, clasped her in his arms, and Chudleigh's voice whispered, passionately:

"My darling, I knew you would come. Be calm, be brave! All is ready."

She did not speak, but her eyes met his in a stupor of agony, and he with a groan caught her up in his arms and carried her to the carriage waiting behind the hedge.

Placing her on the seat tenderly, he whispered to the groom on the box:

"To the station like lightning," and jumping in closed the door and pressed the beautiful form to his breast.

She spoke not a word, only clung white and trembling to his arm.

The horses dashed on—the carriage rocked to and fro in the country lanes.

A quarter of an hour passed.

Chudleigh drew one hand from the waist of the woman he loved, and was stealing a glance at his watch. As he did so the carriage came to a sudden halt, the horses' hoofs could be heard as they reared and struck the ground, and a voice cried from the darkness:

"Stop!"

The groom uttered an imprecation, and Chudleigh sprang up and throwing open the door leaped into the road.

As he did so a horseman rode up to his side, and Maurice Durant's voice said, with startling calmness:

"Another moment and I should have been too late!" Then in a lower, perfectly inaudible tone, to the trembling Carlotta within the carriage as the speaker bent down: "Chudleigh, come farther away. I have news sudden and terrible."

Chudleigh, too startled to do anything but obey, followed the horseman to the farther hedge.

"Now—now," he cried, hoarsely. "Quick; you don't know—" with a glance towards the carriage.

"Yes, I do," returned the other, "and I thank my Creator, and yours, Chudleigh Chichester, that I am in time to stay you. A terrible accident has happened. A horse has run away, a cart been overturned, shattered to pieces; the victim is now being carried up this very lane."

"Accident—cart overturned—victim!" repeated Chudleigh, pressing his hand to his forehead, then exclaiming, passionately: "Well, sir, and what has this to do with me and you? Heavens! you have nearly made me lose this train! Stand aside—I am on business of the utmost importance—I—stand aside, sir, I say!"

Maurice Durant's heavy hand fell on his shoulder. "Do you not understand?" he said, in low, ringing tones. "Turn the carriage and drive back like death, or you are lost. The crowd are bringing the dead man up the lane—will be here in another minute!"

"Dead man!" repeated Chudleigh. "Who?"

"Clarence, Lord Crownbrilliant!" replied Maurice Durant, sternly.

Chudleigh uttered a low cry, and staggered.

"He!" he cried.

"Yes—dead!" returned the other, curtly. "Now quick, or you are lost."

Chudleigh leapt into the carriage.

The groom, at a word from Maurice Durant, turned the plunging horses round, and away they dashed towards Annsleigh again.

Carlotta, lying faint and deathlike against the cushions, clung to him, and, gasping, implored him to tell her what had happened.

He could not speak, but hid her face against his breast.

The carriage stopped at the garden gate.

As if in a dream, Chudleigh lifted the beautiful woman out, and, taking her up in his arms, staggered up the rosary.

"Fly to your room," he whispered, hoarsely, as they entered the hall. "Fly!"

She stood still for a moment, her dark eyes fixed upon him wonderingly, then walked obediently to

the stairs. Before her foot had touched the first one the dull roar of a crowd and the sound of many footsteps were heard outside, and a loud ringing of the bells rang through the house.

A servant hurried to open the hall door, and half a dozen men, followed by a number of others, entered, bearing something long and limp, covered by a cloak.

Carlotta turned round, and stared, statue-like, motionless.

Chudleigh sprang before her.

The foremost man took off his cap and stood irresolute.

At that moment a horseman leapt from his horse, and, pushing aside the crowd, flung open the drawing-door.

"In there!" he said, in a low voice.

Not too low for Carlotta to hear, however, for, suddenly recalled to a consciousness of what was going on around her, she gently pushed Chudleigh aside, and glided through the door after the four men.

They tried to hold her back, but she put them aside with a calm, strong hand, and, advancing to the still burden, lifted the long cloak; then, gazing for a moment on the set, livid face that never more would sneer and mock her, she threw up her arms, and crying "Dead!" fell, senseless, into Chudleigh's arms.

(To be continued.)

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER LXVII.

"COURAGE, Blood, courage!" cried the old woman, in her screeching voice.

The brute growled hoarsely in answer and struggled fiercely to get his man down. But by an effort that was almost superhuman the young man got a firm hold of his knife and plunged it hilt deep in the hound's heart. He fell back with an awful cry and measured his gaunt length upon the reeking stones.

Seeing the fate of her favourite, the old woman uttered the screech of a vulture, and seizing a knife made at the stranger so swiftly that she struck him in the side before he was aware of her intention, inflicting a painful wound.

But he did not falter. His white, shapely arm, with its vivid scarlet cross, held her firmly back, while with his left hand he gathered up a coil of slender rope that he had brought with him in case he should need it in scaling the walls. With this, after some slight difficulty, he bound her securely and set her down in a corner, snarling and howling like a panther.

"Now, then," he said, with a deep breath, "who will come next, I wonder?"

The earl still lay prostrate, unconscious of the deadly conflict that had been going on. Lord Angus remained in a limp heap, with the gaunt bloodhound stretched stark and dead beside him. The man Berkitt was slowly recovering from the effects of the blow he had received.

The young stranger approached him where he lay, and grasping his collar shook him vigorously.

"Get up, murderer," he said.

The clear, imperative voice seemed to bring the fellow to his feet independent of his own will. He rose on his feet with a sullen scowl. The young man faced him with his knife in his hand.

"Do you care to save your life?" he said; "it is at my mercy you see. Promise to do my bidding, and I in turn will promise you safety."

The man looked up, his dull eye gleaming.

"Safety from the law?" he asked, significantly. "Yes, provided you disclose all you know of this infamous plot. Do you consent?"

Berkitt nodded.

"Then help me with the earl, and lead the shortest way out of this den. Come!"

He turned to the prostrate nobleman, and, kneeling beside him, raised his head to his arm, his face softening with indescribable emotion. The earl had not fainted, but he lay in a dead stupor, heart and soul torpid and stagnant.

The young man lifted his head reverently, the tears rising in his brave blue eyes as he saw how worn and deathlike a look his face wore. He motioned to Berkitt to raise his feet, and he obeyed him; and in utter silence, but for the screeching cries of Mother Gwynneth, they bore him from the back vaults and out into the white September moonlight.

The September days were growing cool and wintry, and the sharp winds from the Scottish hills did not agree with the Countess of Mortlake, and Lady Neville asserted that they were chilling her to death.

Hence it was considered expedient to bid adieu to Ravenswood and go up to London, making a short visit to the castle on the route. Margaret

had entirely recovered from her illness, and since it was settled that she was to marry Captain Forsythe instead of the man who called himself Sir Bayard, she was supremely happy, or would have been so but for anxiety in regard to her father. If he would only return, and sanction her engagement, she would be the happiest maiden in wide England. But the earl did not return, nor could all the efforts put forth by Captain Forsythe elicit any information in regard to his disappearance. His son, Lord Angus, had been to Ravenswold, and had offered large rewards in hope of hearing something from him, proving, as Lady Neville very wisely asserted, that the young man had a good heart, and would soon outlive his little errors, as she had always contended.

But nothing could be heard from the earl.

"He's taken himself out of the country," said the countess; "it is just like him to slip off so—and he'll turn up by-and-by, just as quietly as he disappeared. At any rate we shall not find him a day sooner by wintering in the midst of these bleak hills, and I, for one, am going to London."

That settled the question at once, for the countess, to use a homely illustration, was bell-weather of the flock, and wherever her bell tinkled the Ravenswold household must follow.

The packing for the journey was in full proceeding on the last day of September; on the morrow they set out. Doctor Renfrew was going too, back to his lonely little cottage in Northumberland.

He sat in the afternoon sunshine, his head bowed upon his breast. The poor old doctor was heart-broken. He had given up all hope and was going back to his old home to die.

He sat in the sunlight on this the afternoon before his departure, brooding over his great sorrow. He heard the babble of the little mountain stream, the twitter of the swallows, the tinkling of the sheep bells, like one in a dream, and presently the beat of a horse's feet along the rocky road. But he did not look up. He had no interest in life.

The rider came on, leaped from his saddle and approached the spot where the disconsolate father sat. How often in this life, with all its ills and sorrows, angel messengers of joy and glad tidings draw near unto us and we know it not! The doctor did not hear or heed.

The young man laid a light hand upon his shoulder.

"Doctor Renfrew?" he questioned, quietly, "or do I mistake?"

The old man looked up dully, but a moment after his eyes sparkled.

"Who is it?" he said; "who is it that comes to me with the Earl of Strathspey's face grown young again?"

The young man smiled, and for answer rolled up his sleeve, disclosing his powerful arm, with its scarlet birthmark. The doctor gazed incredulously for a moment, and then started to his feet with a cry of surprise.

"Who are you?" he asked, in a bewildered way; "the son of Angus, Earl of Strathspey?"

"His own son, I hope," replied the stranger.

"You are, you are," continued the old man, excitedly, "the boy I have searched for so long, for his mother's sake—the little foundling of the Tyrol!"

"The same—Romulus—the suckling of the milk-goat!"

The doctor caught him in his arms, and fell to sobbing like a child; but the young man raised him tenderly.

"We will speak of this another time," he said.

"I have come with tidings for you—good news."

The old man began to tremble like an aspen leaf.

"For me?" he said, putting out his hands in a piteous, appealing way. "Don't deceive me!—is it of her—my child?"

The stranger took his hands, and beld them.

"Look at me," he said, transfixing the father's wandering gaze with the mesmerizing power of his shining blue eyes—"you must not give way—be strong—your daughter is found!"

"Alive? Safe? Unharmed?" faltered the doctor, with ashen lips.

"All! I have come to take you to her—be strong for her sake."

"I will! And, young man," he added, solemnly, "may Heaven bless and prosper you, and make you the greatest man of all your race, since your lips have spoken the blessed tidings."

The Earl of Strathspey lay upon an improvised couch in the hermit's cave, tossing from side to side in the delirium of brain fever.

Suffering and mental anxiety had done their work, mind and body had both given way, and he lay in immediate danger, too ill to be removed from the mountain cave, to which he had been taken on the night of his rescue.

Doctor Renfrew was there, sitting gravely beside him, so was another famous court physician who had been summoned from London.

Captain Forsythe and Sir Marshall Neville had also come, and Lady Marguerite with them, the countess and Lady Neville remaining at Strathspey Castle for farther information, not desiring, if it could possibly be avoided, to brave the discomforts of that rude north-country place.

Not so with Marguerite, she had hastened to her father's side and, with Maggie, nursed him day and night with a devotion that was touching to behold; but the doctors uttered no word of hope.

The young stranger, Romulus, as he was known in the hermit's cave, had gone across to France, sent thither by the hermit with a mysterious letter, heavily sealed, which he was to deliver to the Lady Superior of an old French convent, known as the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

It was situated away down in the heart of a green valley, under the shadow of the Languedoc Mountains.

The young man, hastening with all speed upon his journey, reached the spot at dusk, just as the gray-robed nuns were chanting their evening prayers.

He delivered his letter into the hands of the Lady Superior, and was conducted into a quaint old parlour to await her pleasure.

After half an hour of impatient waiting the door opened and a slender figure, robed in silver gray, entered with noiseless steps.

Her hair was put back beneath a simple cap, and her face was so white and shadowy, her great blue eyes so unutterably mournful, that the young man rose to his feet half startled.

She paused at the sight of him, a faint flush rose to her waxen cheeks, a sudden light leaped to her eyes, she put out her little wan hands with a pathetic cry.

"My son, my son," she exclaimed; "I know him by his father's face."

And without a question, a thought, an instant's hesitation, the young man clasped her close in a son's embrace.

Crossing the Channel that night, beneath the misty stars, they had ample time for explanation.

The earl was dying!

Even Doctor Renfrew thought so, and he rarely abandoned hope while life remained.

He was dying, and with only one name on his lips.

"Marguerite, my darling, my wife," he would murmur, putting out his feeble hands in touching appeal; "can you forgive me? Will you forgive me?"

Then his voice would be choked by sobs, and he would cry like a little child.

"She's gone—it is too late—I shall never see her face again."

The slender figure, in the robes of silver gray arose from her kneeling posture and came round to the head of the rude couch.

She had only reached the cave an hour before, but in that hour she seemed to have regained all the loveliness of her lost youth.

A faint rose-hue flushed her white cheeks, her golden tresses, threaded here and there with silver, but glossy and abundant still, fell unbound about her shoulders; her blue eyes shone with woman's holiest love.

She came round to the head of the rude couch, and putting her tender arms beneath the dying head raised it to her faithful bosom.

"My love, my husband," she murmured, dropping soft kisses on the whitening lips; "don't you know me? Look at me once!—speak to me once! Oh, Angus, you could not leave me thus after all these bitter years."

The soul of Lord Strathspey was almost within the shadow of the dark valley; but the voice of a love that had never swerved from its allegiance, the kisses of the wife who had been true and tender despite all her cruel wrongs, called him back to life and consciousness.

He lay breathless for a moment, the soft kisses still raining on his face, the tender voice calling him by every endearing name, then a gasping sigh heaved his breast, his closed eyes fluttered open, and their gaze rested on the white, sweet face that hung above him.

His lips moved, and, bending low, she caught the feeble whisper:

"Marguerite, my wife, you have come back to forgive me?"

She stooped yet lower till her cheek touched his, and whispered back:

"To forgive you and love you, and never part from you again."

A look of unutterable joy filled his solemn eyes, a sigh of blissful content escaped his lips, and he settled down like a babe and fell asleep upon her bosom.

And when the red October dawn brightened the summits of the encircling hills, and a golden glow began to disperse the shadows of the mountain cavern, the joyful tidings went forth that Angus, Earl of Strathspey, would live.

The earl was convalescent—at least, he had re-

covered sufficiently to be removed; and on the eve of their departure a happy little party gathered about the blazing wood fire in the hermit's cave.

On the morrow they were to separate—the earl and his family were going by slow stages to Strathspey Castle, and Doctor Renfrew and Maggie were to return to their long-forsaken cottage.

The earl and his family, his wife, his son!

Sitting there, bolstered up on his couch, wrapped in his dressing-gown, the pale, wasted, meek-faced invalid looked very unlike the proud and haughty peer of days gone by, but in his eyes was a light of holy happiness they had never known before.

He could not rest if his wife left him for an instant; sleeping or waking, her hand must be clasped in his, her sweet, white face must be where he could see it continually.

"I cannot quite believe that you are alive and all my own, Marguerite," he would say, with touching tenderness, "and I'm constantly in dread that you'll vanish from me like a dream."

"I shall never vanish again, dearest," she would reply. "Heaven has given us to each other for time and eternity; we will never part again."

And now they sat together in the red glow of the wood blaze, the October winds wailing without—Lady Strathspey supporting her husband's head, and the son, the young man who needed no better proof of his birth-right than the face he bore, his father's own face over again, sitting a little apart.

Sir Marshall Neville and his wife had gone on to the castle, and Lady Marguerite had accompanied them, but the doctor stayed with his patient, and Maggie remained with her father.

"There are many things to be explained before we part," remarked the hermit as he threw another faggot on his fire; "and perhaps it is as well to begin now. Your lordship doubtless has some curiosity to hear the history of your son's life, and to be assured that he is your son and no impostor."

The earl bowed gravely, and his countess smiled, her own pathetic, tender smile, her eyes resting on the noble face of the boy, for whose sake she had borne so much, with unutterable love.

"We need no assurance," she said; "our hearts tell the truth that cannot be mistaken—and my son's face speaks for itself—he is the Earl of Strathspey's son."

"He is the Earl of Strathspey's son," replied the hermit, solemnly; "there is not one link lost in the mysterious chain of events that go to prove his identity. I have been living in this cavern for over two-score years," he continued, "excluded from the world—for what reason there is no need of telling here. Fifteen years ago, this summer gone, I was awakened about midnight, one stormy night, by the sound of human voices. As no one ever intruded upon me, or even seemed to suspect that this cavern was inhabited, I felt somewhat startled at first, and lay perfectly quiet, listening to what was going on. There were two persons within the cave, a man and woman, and they were holding an angry altercation.

"I will not kill the boy," were the first words I understood, spoken in the man's voice.

"I tell you he shall be killed," replied the woman, shrilly; "I'll do it myself. You enjoyed Lady Drummond the first time, you shall not do it again. Do you want him to live and supplant our own boy?"

"Neither do I want my hands stained with blood again. I tried that work once, and I'll never do it again. I'll leave the child here, in this cave; if he dies, 'tis no look-out o'mine—if he lives, let him live—the world's wide enough for him and us too."

"But if his birth should come to light, if Lady Drummond should find out, then our own boy will suffer."

"But the Earl of Strathspey has received our boy as his own son, and he won't be likely to abandon him; and Lady Drummond never will find out, if you'll only keep close. Come, the boy's asleep; we'll leave him here, and tell Lady Drummond he's dead."

"There was some little more altercation, and then they departed. I arose, and, taking a light, went into the main cavern, and there, reposing on a bed of moss and leaves, was a little lad with fair hair and a fair face, and on his right arm, from which the loose sleeve had fallen back, gleamed a blood-red cross."

"I had heard of the famous Strathspey birthmark, the scarlet cross, and I was pretty well convinced that this child was the Earl of Strathspey's son."

"I took him in my arms, and brought him in here, and laid him down upon my couch. He slept all night, and awoke the next morning, and looked around him with a pair of the brightest blue eyes that ever a lad possessed."

"He said his name was Romulus, and that he used to live with grandmother under the big mountains; but the bad woman stole him from the pretty lady who was his mother."

"I fully intended to take the child to the Earl of Strathspey, and tell him what I knew, but upon

inquiry I found that the earl had gone abroad, and that his countess was insane, and there seemed to have been great trouble in regard to this same boy.

"In the meantime, as the days wore along, my little lad grew very dear to me, it was like giving up my life to part from him. And I argued, selfishly perhaps, that he might come to harm again if I let him go out of my hands.

"To be brief, I determined to keep him with me, to rear him up to manhood, and wait for an opportunity to restore him to his father.

"He has been the blessing of my blighted life for long and lonely years. I have done a good part by him too. I sent him to Heidelberg, and then to France, and his education is thorough. And now, Lord Strathspie, I restore him to you and your countess a son you may justly be proud of."

(To be continued.)

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER V.

ABOUT an hour after the receipt by Lord Chetwynd of the telegram announcing the speedy intended arrival of his step-brother in Edinburgh Gilbert Monk drove up in a cab to the door of the "Royal Hotel," alighted, and was shown up at once to a room that had been ordered and prepared for him.

His first proceeding was to remove from his person all the dust of travel, and to attire himself in a dress suit.

"It is necessary to make a good impression on the little heathen," he said to himself as he brushed out his silky beard.

He summoned a servant to conduct him to Lord Chetwynd's apartments, dismissing him at the door of his lordship's parlour, and announcing himself by a heavy double knock.

It was the marquise himself who came to the door, giving him admittance.

"I am glad to see you, Gilbert," he exclaimed, extending his hand, his blue eyes lighting up in warmth of welcome. "It is kind of you to come so far to meet us. Come up to the fire. You look chilled."

"You have overwhelmed all your friends with surprise, my lord. Accept my congratulations. You look a happy Benedict, and I wish you and Lady Chetwynd long and happy lives. Sylvia desired me to bring you her love and to tell you that she is all impatient to see her new sister."

The marquise's fair face flushed with pleasure.

"I believe that Bernice and Sylvia will be like two sisters," he said. "Bernice never had a sister nor a girl friend. There were no people in her rank of life at St. Kilda, and she grew up by herself as one apart. She found her companions and friends in the sea-gulls, the wild waves, and the free winds. She is happy in the prospect of finding a sister in Sylvia, whom she is prepared to love."

"Who would have believed six months ago that you would be married to-day?" remarked Gilbert Monk, sentimentally. "And you've married all for love, like King Cophetua when he wedded the beggar-maid. You remind me of Lord What's-his-name who married a pretty peasant without declaring to her his rank, and when he brought her to his stately home she went insane in her delight and surprise. But your marriage is not like that. When you wooed your pretty peasant it was not in the disguise of a labourer, but as the Marquis of Chetwynd, with a long rent roll and a dozen titles and dignities."

"You are mistaken, Monk," he said, with an unconscious sternness. "Lady Chetwynd is no 'pretty peasant.' She is a lady as noble and high bred as any in existence, and will honour her new position, instead of being honoured by it."

"Ah, yes, of course," replied Monk, in his boyish, exuberant way. "Young husbands are always lovers, and in your eyes at least Lady Chetwynd is perfect. That is as it should be. Don't frown at me so blackly, Chetwynd. You said yourself in your letter that she is the adopted daughter of the minister of St. Kilda. I take it for granted, of course, that she is the child of some native fisherman or egg-hunter."

"My letter has evidently given you a false impression, Gilbert, and I desire to rectify it before you see my wife. Lady Chetwynd comes of gentle blood, and is not a native of St. Kilda. I may as well say now to you, in confidence, that my dear wife is ignorant of her parentage, her birth, her name—"

"What a romance. Not know who she is? Why, she's like the heroine of a play. Heroines never know who they are, you know, and die all very well but it will have a deucedly odd look in Debut."

"You annoy me, Monk," said Lord Chetwynd—"or you would annoy me if I did not know you to be a thoughtless fellow, incapable of deliberately wounding me. Lady Chetwynd was taken to St. Kilda in her infancy by her father in his own pri-

vate yacht. Her father was a gentleman named South. He engaged Mrs. Gwellan to take charge of his child for a certain period, declaring that he would return for her. But he never came. He probably died."

"I should think to the contrary of that. Having rid himself of the child, he was prepared to live."

Every word spoken so carelessly by Gilbert Monk was a dagger wound to Lord Chetwynd, and so the wily speaker intended.

His lordship's face flushed a deeper red, and he bit his lips angrily, while again he crossed and recrossed the floor with impetuous tread.

"We won't discuss this subject, Gilbert," he said, after a pause. "As the Marchioness of Chetwynd, my wife will take a prominent place in society, and you will find that even 'our censorious world' will not be so rude as to make close examination of her pedigree. It is enough to say that she was Miss Gwellan, of St. Kilda."

"Yes, that ought to content people," assented Monk, half-doubtingly. "I am all impatience to see Lady Chetwynd, Roy. I have formed the most exaggerated ideas of her beauty, which must be absolutely marvellous to cause you to so completely forget or overlook all distinctions of rank."

"It is nearly our dinner hour, and Lady Chetwynd is probably ready to join us," said the marquise, coldly.

He bowed and withdrew into an adjoining chamber.

The door of the inner room presently opened, and Lord Chetwynd reappeared, with his young wife on his arm.

Gilbert Monk started forward with uncontrollable eagerness, but no vision of beauty met his gaze.

He beheld only a slender young girl, with a thin, dark face, a brown, gipsy complexion, clearly out of features, and a broad, low brow, shaded by masses of crinkling, black hair, which fell in lustrous waves touched with purple bloom far below her waist.

His first sensation was of amazement that Lord Chetwynd could have given up Sylvia Monk for a girl like this, but when Bernice, approaching him and clinging gracefully to the arm of her young husband, upraised to him her marvellous eyes, all glowing like stars, he felt the spell of her wonderful fascination, and recognized in her a radiance of soul powerful enough to glorify even her plain features.

The youthful marchioness was attired in full dinner costume of maize-coloured silk with overdress of white lace, and ornaments of yellow topaz.

She was not awkward nor embarrassed, but bore herself with that quiet self-possession and self-consciousness that are everywhere recognized as the truest indices of thorough good breeding.

"Bernice," said the young marquise, "allow me to present to you my step-brother, Gilbert Monk, Gilbert, this is my dear wife, Lady Chetwynd."

The girlish, gipsy-looking bride held out her hand frankly, and Monk pressed it warmly, uttering wishes for her happiness which seemed genuine and heartfelt.

In half an hour they were apparently fast friends—Bernice accepting Monk as a brother, and treating him with a charming yet unconscious familiarity that delighted him.

The three dined together in the cosy parlour, and spent the evening in conversation.

At ten o'clock Monk withdrew to his own room.

"I have made a good beginning," he said to himself, caressing his beard as he surveyed his reflection complacently in the mirror of his dressing bureau. "This girl has a strange power to charm. She reminds me of some of those French women I've read about, all fascination in spite of ugliness, and I'll stake my soul she's as innocent as an angel even in her inmost thoughts. It is as if she had come from a nunnery. If it were not for Sylvia, and the fact of my own altered position, I'd be inclined to make friends with Lady Chetwynd, but as it is I'll win her friendship, and use it to further my own interests. And one thing is sure—I cannot interfere with Sylvia's plans for our mutual aggrandizement."

While he was thus communing with himself Bernice had seated herself on the sofa beside her husband, and was communicating her impressions concerning Monk.

"Your step-brother is a delightful person, Roy," she exclaimed. "I never met any one like him before, although that's not singular, considering how few people I've met. I hope he will stay at Chetwynd Park always, and I hope his sister is like him. What a delightful household we shall have!"

"I should be better contented to have you all to myself," said the marquise, frankly, with a loving smile; "but I must not be selfish. We will start for home in the morning, Bernice, and you will see Sylvia for yourself."

In accordance with Lord Chetwynd's plans the party left Edinburgh the next morning for London.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE Gilbert Monk had been so successfully playing the part assigned to him, and had ingrati-

ated himself in the esteem of the youthful marchioness, his sister had been far more active and no less successful in the rôle she had undertaken.

Having communicated the fact of Lord Chetwynd's marriage to the bailiff, the steward and the butler, through Gilbert Monk, as recorded, she summoned the housekeeper to a private conference and imparted the news to her.

Miss Monk was deadly pale, and the glitter of her eyes and the restless agitation of her manner proclaimed that she had received a cruel and unexpected blow.

She told the story, reading aloud a portion of his lordship's letter, with quivering voice and averted face.

Mrs. Skewer, the elderly housekeeper, a lady-like woman, round and rosy in appearance, who had occupied her present position some twenty years, received the tidings in almost incredulous surprise.

"It must be some horrid mistake, Miss Monk," exclaimed the good woman. "My lord is playing some cruel jest, though it's not like him. But then no Chetwynd was ever guilty of a dishonourable act, and my lord is incapable of putting a public slight upon a lady, and that lady one he expected to marry."

"You have heard the letter," replied Miss Monk, drearily. "It is only too true that I am publicly jilted by my betrothed husband, and that I shall be pitied and stared at and gossiped about for the rest of my life. Oh, Heaven, it is horrible! But Lord Chetwynd must not be blamed, Mrs. Skewer. He has been led away from honour and duty by a sudden, mad infatuation for this young lady—if she is a lady by birth—and I pray he may never regret it. Let there be no gossiping in the servants' hall upon the matter. As for me, to leave the Park now would be to proclaim the fact that I have been jilted. I can only take the sting out of all the gossip by remaining here for the present, and so Lord Chetwynd seems to think, for he urges me to stay."

Miss Skewer was full of admiration for a spirit so self-sacrificing, so proud, so womanly, as she enthusiastically and tearfully declared.

Miss Monk made some further allusion to Lord Chetwynd's "low-born bride," stating her belief that the marchioness was the daughter of a rude fisher of St. Kilda, and had been adopted by the pastor of the island on account of her beauty.

Mrs. Skewer, in all honesty and innocence of soul, spread throughout the household the false impressions she had herself received. Miss Monk was believed to have been disgracefully treated by Lord Chetwynd, and as all his dependents loved him, the blame was laid, not upon him, but upon Bernice, against whom a smothered hostility was thus created from the first, and this hostility was deepened by the idea that the young marchioness was "low born, and consequently no better than the lowest of the servants."

Satisfied that the elements of discord were in play, Miss Monk, with the air of a martyr, which was by no means assumed, superintended the arrangements for the reception of the bridal pair.

The marquise had requested Miss Monk, in his letter, to refurnish a certain suite of rooms which his mother had occupied, and had specified that the prevailing colour of the new furniture should be crimson.

Miss Monk sent for upholsterers, who, under her directions, soon transformed the great, cold-looking chambers into bowers of warmth and brightness. Miss Monk filled the bay-window with flowers and caused a fire to be lighted daily in the grate, that all dampness might be dispelled from the long-unused rooms.

The bedroom, dressing-room and bath-room were refitted to accord with the boudoir, and the apartments were all ready for their expected occupants some three days in advance of their arrival.

A telegraphic message to Miss Monk announced the hour of the coming of the bridal party.

Mr. Sanders, the bailiff, received a similar despatch, and in good time set out in the barouche for Eastbourne, a drive of ten miles, followed by a spring cart to bring back Lady Chetwynd's maid and luggage.

The servants were all in new livery of green and gold, and wore bridal favours on their coats.

Miss Monk watched the imposing equipage as it dashed down the avenue with a bitter pang of envy and regret.

But for her own jealous anger of months ago this barouche might have been proceeding to Eastbourne to bring her back from the station upon her return from her bridal tour.

The thought nearly maddened her, and she glided away to her own room with a desperate soul and a face of deathly pallor.

"I am well-punished for my wild folly in breaking my engagement," she muttered, "but I did not believe he would take me at my word. Oh! this is more bitter than death."

She fought with her rage and her desperation until she had gained a despairing calmness, and then

she went into her dressing-room to prepare her toilet.

The day was chilly with a keen breeze from the Channel. A fire had been kindled in Miss Monk's dressing-room, and she went up to the hearth, and stooping held her hands over the blaze, shivering as with an ague. Like all native East Indians she loved warmth, and delighted to bask in the sun or the firelight as a cat does.

She was alone, but she had barely discovered the fact when the door opened, and her old nurse and sole attendant came into the room.

"Is it you, Rague?" inquired Miss Monk, listlessly. "It is time to dress, I suppose. But how can I dress to meet his wife?" and her tone grew suddenly fierce. "I will not—I will not—"

"Oh, hush, missy," interrupted Rague, soothingly. "There you go into one of those fits of passion that are wasting your strength and killing you. You have scarcely slept at night since the ill news came, and you rage like a mad-woman whenever you are alone. Are you going to be weak and quietly sink into the place of dependent—you who have the beauty of a queen, my darling? Or will you rise up and be mistress of yourself and the fate of this low-born Lady Chetwynd? Bah! I see you have really no spirit. There is no obstacle between you and Lord Chetwynd that your own hand—or mine—cannot set aside."

"You are right, Rague," she exclaimed. "I am childish to fret at an obstacle in my way which can easily be removed. But I will be weak no longer. Dress me. I must look my best. I will not appear haggard by the side of Chetwynd's young bride, nor shall her beauty dim mine. Quickly, Rague—my most becoming dress."

The Hindoo woman smiled approval, and hastened to obey. She was old and thin, with a skin like ancient parchment, seamed with wrinkles, and of dark brown line approaching to blackness.

Her small eyes were like polished jet beads. Her scanty hair was hidden by a red turban, and she wore a clinging gown of Indian silk, and sandals on her feet.

She was a weird, witch-like woman, and was regarded by the servants at the Park with a mysterious awe and fear.

She proceeded to dress her mistress, and when she had finished exclaimed, exultantly:

"There! Lord Chetwynd won't bring a handsomer woman to Chetwynd Park, and he'll be sick at heart of his fisher-girl when he sees you, missy. Why, you look like a queen."

Miss Monk was robed in purple velvet of a warm shade, which admirably relieved the swarthiness of her complexion.

Her dress was made with a court train, which was trimmed with ermine, and trailed in heavy voluminous waves on the carpet.

Her corsage, open at the throat, was edged with a narrow band of ermine, above which rose a filmy frill of point lace. A fall of similar lace shaded her hands. Her waist was decorated by a belt of flexible gold, and a string of rubies adorned her neck. Her hair shaded heavily her serpent-like forehead, and she wore a quaint tiara of golden stars.

The chalky whiteness of her face still remained unchanged, save in the cheeks, where a glowing red was burning, but the fiery sparks glittered in her dull black eyes, and the serpent grace of her movements was more manifest than ever.

She was indeed like the cobra, beautiful, sinuous, undulating—deadly!

"Hark!" she whispered, appraising her hand in an unconsciously theatrical gesture. "Do you hear them? The bells of Chetwynd are ringing the bridal peal. The sound is maddening! No, no, don't speak to me, Rague. I am calm. I shall not give way to one of my white rages. I must be ready to receive the bride!"

She gave utterance to a strange, mirthless laugh, that was singularly chilling and repulsive.

Old Rague crossed the floor and unlocked and opened a massive Indian cabinet, and brought forth a goblet half filled with a colorless liquid, which she presented to her mistress.

It was a soothing draught, and Miss Monk had had frequent recourse to it of late.

Miss Monk, after a few words spoken in the Hindoostanee tongue with her attendant, glided from her rooms into the great central hall of the mansion, and crossed to Lady Chetwynd's apartments.

A fire was burning in each of the rooms. A pallid sort of sunlight came in at the curtained windows.

She passed into the dressing-room; a spacious chamber with crimson couches, low lanterns, and tall mirrors stretching from floor to ceiling, with other mirrors in frames unable of being moved about at pleasure.

The bedroom was beyond, and might have been the sleeping-room of a Roman princess. The floor was paved with marble of dazzling whiteness. Before the low carved French bedstead—with its canopy of filmy lace, and its linen, exquisitely embroi-

dered with the Chetwynd name and crest, and its coverlet of embroidered satin—and before the low silken couch and the hearth were Persian rugs of brilliant dye.

The walls were faintly flushed with pink, like the glow of sunrise. It was a large, luxurious room, the gem of the suite.

Miss Monk passed out into the hall, consumed with envy and bitterness of spirit.

All this might have been her own, but for her own act.

She hated herself, Bernice, Chetwynd, the whole world, in that moment of humiliation.

She descended to the lower hall.

The joy-bells of the little hotel of Chetwynd-by-the-Sea, a mile distant, were still ringing a merry chime. The villagers were beginning to arrive in the grounds, and the servants were assembling in the great marble hall.

The butler, in his dress suit, took charge of the dozen male servants, and Mrs. Skewer, in her best gown and cap with pink ribbons, headed her array of cooks and housemaids, comprising another dozen at least.

A great hush fell upon the groups of servants as Miss Monk glided down the grand staircase.

They all remembered that she was to have been Marchioness of Chetwynd, and they looked at her with curious and pitying eyes.

But she passed between the parallel ranks as not seeing them, and entered the drawing-room, closing the door behind her.

The drawing-room was some fifty feet in length and proportionately high. The ceiling had been frescoed by an artist of genius. The walls were panelled with satin. The furniture, which was now, was upholstered with gold-colored satin, relieved with puffs of black velvet. The character of the room was grand and stately, and a beautiful harmony characterized all the appointments.

Miss Monk proceeded to a recessed window and waited the coming of the bridal party. She had not long now to wait.

As the vehicle approached the carriage porch Miss Monk essayed to go out to meet the new arrivals, but she was suddenly strengthened. Her courage had for the moment deserted her. Her breath came hot and quick; her eyes glared; her heart beat like the pounding of a hammer. She heard the bridal party enter the hall; she heard the voice of Lord Chetwynd uttering a brief greeting to his household and introducing the Lady of Chetwynd; she heard a faint cheer from the servants; she heard footsteps approaching the drawing-room.

Then she rose up, and by a supreme effort called a false smile to her face and a welcoming look to her loathing eyes.

The door opened, and the marquis came in with his bride.

Sylvia Monk swept forward, that false smile on her lips, that false light in her eyes, and with a cry of ecstasy she flung herself upon Lord Chetwynd's breast, exclaiming:

"Oh, Roy, my brother, welcome home!"

The marquis kissed her with a brother's fondness, and released her just as Mr. Sanders and Gilbert Monk appeared at the door.

"Sylvia," said the young lord, taking her hand, "I have brought you a sister. It will make me happy to have you two, who are both so dear to me, love each other. Bernice! this is Sylvia whom you have so longed to see—my dear sister Sylvia."

Miss Monk drew back and surveyed her successful rival in one long, comprehensive gaze.

Was it for this girl she had been forgotten, she asked herself—this girl without beauty, except in her wondrous eyes and hair? Was this slender, unformed young creature mistress of Chetwynd Park?

Bernice looked up at her with an appealing gaze. The girl was dazzled by this splendid, swarthy woman, with her handsome face and regal attire.

"Won't you love me, Sylvia?" she asked, in a pleading voice. "I have always wished for a sister. Will you be mine?"

Miss Monk replied by taking the young bride in her arms and kissing her.

Bernice returned the caress with interest, and Chetwynd smiled, believing that they were already friends.

"Let me take you up to your room, Bernice," said Miss Monk, when greetings had been exchanged and questions about the journey from London had been asked and answered.

She drew Lady Chetwynd's arm in hers and led her from the room, upstairs, to the bridal apartments.

"Are these my rooms?" asked the young marchioness, in surprise and delight. "Oh, they are lovely! How happy I shall be here, Sylvia! (I may call you Sylvia, may I not?) And you must call me Bernice."

"It's an odd name; at least, it's not common," said Miss Monk. "It's a Welsh name? I understand your papa is Welsh."

Bernice coloured.

"I don't know to what country my name belongs, but I suppose it's English," she replied. "Mr. Gwel-lan is Welsh, but he did not give me my name. My own father gave it to me."

"Ah, it is probably a family name then," said Miss Monk, carelessly. "Is your papa living, Bernice?"

"No—I don't know. I will tell you all my story some day, Sylvia. It is not a happy one altogether, but I have hopes and dreams of solving the mystery of it some time. But I am happy now, happy and content. You don't know how good Roy is," and the young wife's lovely eyes filled with sudden tears. "Oh, Sylvia, I mean to be a good wife to him. I mean to sympathize with all his aspirations, to become a part of his inner self, to be all in all to him, as he is to me. You shall never regret that your brother married a nameless little nobody. I intend Roy shall be proud of me."

A spasm of pain that was not unmarked by Bernice passed over Sylvia's face.

"We—we will talk of all this later," said Miss Monk, hoarsely. "You will want to dress now. I will send your maid to you. I see that you brought one with you. Your luggage is in the dressing-room."

Excusing herself, Miss Monk hastily left the apartment.

Bernice examined her rooms, pironetted before her mirrors, looked from her windows, danced like a very child upon the marble floor of her bedroom, and then with a sobbing face but a joyous heart flung herself on the hearth-rug of her boudoir and enjoyed the warmth and firelight.

Her maid, entering presently, found her thus.

Lady Chetwynd rose leisurely, and dropped into luxurious slumber.

She was not willing that her maid, a French woman whom Lord Chetwynd had engaged for her in London, upon the recommendation of an elderly lady friend, should find her in such a childish attitude, the more especially as Ffina was a silly, gossiping creature, whose professional skill was expected to atone for a great many faults of her tongue and brain.

"Ah, madame," said Ffina, with a long breath, "it's a grand place, this Chetwynd Park! Such suites of rooms, such numbers of servants, such magnificence everywhere! It's a grand thing to be a rich milord! Shall you dress now, my lady?"

The bride assented with a little nod.

"What dress shall it be, my lady?" asked Ffina.

"I met Miss Monk in the hall and she sent me to you. Ah, she looks a queen in her velvet and ermine! She is only my lord's step-sister, and they say, down in the servants' hall, that that's no relation at all, and that when my lord went away in his yacht he was betrothed to her, and that he played her false and jilted her, all because of a lover's quarrel," continued gossiping Ffina. "The tall housemaid says that my lord loves her yet, and that his pique will cost him dear. It's the talk among the servants; my lady, and they are all Miss Monk's friends. You will discharge them all, I suppose; is it not so, my lady?"

Bernice grew pale.

The foolish gossiping thoughtless maid stabbed her cruelly.

Miss Monk's singular beauty gained by contrast with her own plainness.

Roy had never told her a word of his betrothal to Sylvia.

A great spasm of jealousy convulsed her passionate young heart. Yet she managed to say, with a certain dignity:

"You must not come to me with servants' gossip, Ffina. I do not care to hear what is said in the servants' hall. Attend to your duties when in my presence, and your duty now is to dress me as soon as possible."

Ffina's chattering tongue was silenced, and she proceeded to fulfil her task.

Bernice was soon dressed.

Her attire was of bridal white, consisting of a heavy white silk with point lace overdress, and a full set of the Chetwynd family diamonds, great liquid measures of radiant light, which glittered on her arms, her neck, her bosom, in her ears, and above her streaming waves of hair.

The dark, patrician face was still pale, but her brilliant eyes were more radiant and glowing than her diamonds.

"Now you may go, Ffina," said Lady Chetwynd.

"Stay! Send some one to Lord Chetwynd and say to him I desire to see him."

Ffina departed on her errand.

"It is not so that Roy was ever betrothed to Miss Monk," said Bernice to herself, sternly. "He would have told me. I shall ask him. I will know if he married me in consequence of a lover's quarrel."

She awaited the coming of her young husband in a breathless anxiety.

(To be continued.)



[EDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON BULWER-LYTTON.]

LORD LYTTON.

The man is noble, and his fame folds in
This orb of the earth. *Shakespeare.*

AFTER having enriched English literature for more than half a century the most prolific and versatile author of his time has finished his career. During a temporary residence at Argyll Lodge, Torquay, Lord Lytton was attacked by acute inflammation induced by a discharge from the ear to which he had long been subject. Insensibility supervening, he expired on the 18th ult., and on the following Saturday, in accordance with general desire, was interred in Westminster Abbey.

Lord Lytton was the third and youngest son of General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, and of Elizabeth Barbara, the only daughter and heiress of Richard Warburton Lytton, of Knebworth, Herts, and was educated at home by his mother, and afterwards in private schools, whence he passed to Trinity College and subsequently to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he carried off the Chancellor's Prize medal with his English poem on "Sculpture." During the long vacation he made pedestrian excursions over England and Scotland, and the year after he left college he travelled on horseback through a great part of France. He graduated B.A. in 1826, and M.A. in 1835, and at a later period Oxford, and in 1864 Cambridge conferred on him the honorary degree of D.C.L.

His strong literary bias displayed itself in early life, and he first appeared in print in 1820, when only fifteen years of age, as the author of "Ismael, an Oriental tale, with other poems." His next published work, in 1825, was the prize poem on "Sculpture," already mentioned. In the following year he printed at Paris, exclusively for private circulation, fifty copies of "Weeds and Wild Flowers," a small collection of poems and of maxims and aphorisms, which has never been published in the editions of his collected works. In 1827 he pub-

lished a tale, in verse, entitled "O'Neil; or, the Rebel," and "Falkland," a love story, in one volume, both anonymously.

His first great work of fiction was "Pelham; or the Adventures of a Gentleman," which coming out anonymously, at the close of 1827, at first but coldly received, ere long created a great sensation, and stamped its author as a master of his art. Its eventual brilliant success was well sustained by the following novels:—"The Disowned," in 1828; "Devereux," in 1829; and "Paul Clifford," in 1830. The author's next production, in 1831, was a satirical poem entitled "The Siamese Twins," associated with which, in the same volume, was the charming poem of "Milton." In 1832 he gave to the world his celebrated novel of "Eugene Aram;" and in 1833 "Godolphin" made its appearance, anonymously at first.

To the pages of the *New Monthly Magazine* Bulwer now contributed a series of papers, collected and republished in 1835, under the title of "The Student." His "Pilgrims of the Rhine," an illustrated book, was followed in 1833 by "England and the English," a series of witty and caustic sketches of national manners, etc. The next work from the prolific pen of this popular writer was his classical and picturesque romance of "The Last Days of Pompeii," the result of a tour in Italy. Another work of fiction, on Italian ground, of great historic interest, appeared in 1835; this was "Rienzi," the Roman tribune of the middle ages.

In the year 1831 Mr. Bulwer had entered Parliament as member for St. Ives, in the Liberal interest; and in 1832 he was returned to the new Reformed Parliament as member for Lincoln, which he continued to represent till 1841, when he lost his seat, and for a considerable interval kept aloof from active political life. As an adherent to the Whig party he had in those years taken a strong interest in, and had spoken often, and with great effect, on various Liberal measures, especially on questions affecting the free diffusion of knowledge, and also on

slavery. During this part of his Parliamentary career he published, in 1835, a political pamphlet entitled "The Crisis," in reference to the brief interruption of the Whig Government by the Conservative Ministry of Sir Robert Peel. So extraordinary was the popularity of the brochure that a single day exhausted the first edition, and in less than fourteen days after its first publication as many successive editions were sold off. Lord Melbourne, the Premier, offered him, as an acknowledgment of the important public service he had thus rendered his party, one of the lordships of the Admiralty—an offer which was declined.

In the same year "Leila; or, the Siege of Granada," was published, together with "Calderon the Courtier," in one volume, illustrated; and in the following year Bulwer made his first essay as a dramatist with the play in five acts of "The Duchess of La Valliere," which, as a performance, was but partially successful.

He next appeared before the world as an historical writer, in "Athens: its Rise and Fall," a work abounding in research, acumen, and elegant scholarship, but which has rather unaccountably been allowed to stop short with the two volumes published in 1836.

Returning to the paths of fiction, his next novel was "Ernest Maltravers," published in 1837, a continuation of which, under the title of "Alice; or, the Mysteries," appeared in the following year. It was towards the close of that year (1838), on the occasion of the coronation of her present Majesty, that this author and the late Sir John Herschel were created baronets, having been specially chosen for the bestowal of that honour as the appropriate representatives of British literature and science.

Not daunted by his previous imperfect success as a dramatic writer, Sir Edward Bulwer produced in 1838 the five-act comedy "The Lady of Lyons," which not only achieved a brilliant success at the time but has retained its hold of the stage ever since. "Richelieu" came out in 1839; "The Sea Captain," in five acts, in 1839. Though this play ran nightly through the whole season, the author withdrew it from the stage for the object of reproducing it with certain alterations. This intention was suspended by Macready's retirement from his profession, but the play ultimately reappeared, greatly elevated in poetic language, and with complete reconstruction of plot, at the Lyceum Theatre in 1869, under the title of "The Rightful Heir." In 1840 was brought out the comedy of "Money," in five acts; and eleven years afterwards, in 1851, that of "Not so Bad as We Seem," in five acts, written for amateur performance, as a benefit for the "Guild of Literature and Art"—the idea of which is said to have originated during a visit paid to Sir Edward's mansion at Knebworth by several literary celebrities and artists.

Having conceived the notion of a journal which should combine scientific information with politics and general literature, Sir Edward, in conjunction with Sir D. Brewster and Dr. Lardner, commenced a periodical in the early part of 1841, founded upon this design, entitled the *Monthly Chronicle*, but it was too scientific to suit the public taste of the day, and after a few months' existence its projector retired from it, dissatisfied with the result. During his connection with this organ he contributed to its political section a remarkable "Historical Review of the State of England and Europe at the Accession of Queen Victoria," on which M. Guizot bestowed the highest commendation. In the same year Sir Edward resumed his career as a novelist by the production of "Night and Morning." This was succeeded, in 1842, by "Zanoni," "the well-loved work," to use the author's own words, "of his mature manhood." About the same time he published a volume of poetry, entitled "Eva and the Illomened Marriage," since incorporated, with considerable additions, in the complete edition of his poetical works.

Not long after the cessation of his first Parliamentary labours, in 1841, Sir E. Bulwer travelled in Germany, and devoted himself to the study of its language and its rich stores of literature, when he collected materials for a life of Schiller, the especial object of his admiration, and availed himself of this information in the biography of that great writer which he appended to the first edition of his translation of the "Poems and Ballads of Schiller," in 1844.

"The Last of the Barons," his next essay in romance, appeared early in 1843. At the close of this year Sir Edward lost his mother, and succeeding to her valuable estates of Knebworth, etc., he, in compliance with her will, changed his name, taking the historic surname of Lytton, by royal licence, in addition to his patronymic Bulwer. The effects of unremitting toil having seriously affected his health, he was induced to try the hydropathic system, in the year 1845; and in a sparkling letter to W. Harrison Ainsworth, published as the "Confessions of a Water Patient," he made known his impressions and opinions of the efficacy of that system.

Considerable changes having occurred in the circumstances of the country, his political views had gradually become modified, and it was as a Conservative that Sir Bulwer Lytton now sought to be returned to Parliament. In 1852, after having explained his views some twelve months before, in his famous "Letter to John Bull, Esquire," which passed through ten editions, he re-entered the House of Commons as one of the members for the county of Hert.

The year 1845 witnessed the appearance, anonymously, of the first portion of his remarkable poem, "The New Timon," which is part satirical and part narrative. This work came out complete in one volume in 1847, the authorship remaining for some time unacknowledged. "Lucretia; or, the Children of Night," a romance of grim character, also appeared in 1847; and this was succeeded, in periodical instalments, by one of the author's greatest achievements in fiction—"The Cartons," eventually published in a collected form in 1849. "King Arthur: an Epic in Twelve Books"—not avowed at first—and issued in four parts, was published complete in the latter year. Meanwhile the indefatigable author had given to the world, in 1848, his historical romance of "Harold, the last of the Saxon Kings."

Spending the whole of 1849 abroad, Sir Bulwer Lytton, began, while residing for a time at Nice, his masterly delineation of the varieties of English life, which he has emphatically designated as, "My Novel." This, like "The Cartons," originally appeared in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and was not published complete till 1853. It was followed, in a similar mode of issue, by the most elaborate of the author's novels, "What will He Do with It?" commencing at the end of 1857, and published as a whole in 1858.

"A Strange Story" appeared originally in the pages of *All the Year Round*, and was issued as a complete book in 1862. He has since published "Caxtoniana; or, Essays on Life, Literature, and Manners, by Pisistratus Caxton," in two vols., in 1863; "The Lost Tales of Miletus," a collection of ancient legends in original rhythmical strophes, founded upon, though not directly imitating, the Greek metres, in 1866; a translation, in metres of similar character, of "Horace's Odes," with a preliminary critical essay on the genius of Horace, and the causes of his popularity, in 1869; "Walpole; or, Every Man has his Price," a comedy, in three acts, written in the rhymed metre of Molière, in 1869; and a new edition of "King Arthur," revised and in part re-written, in 1870.

In addition to the long list of his works above enumerated may be mentioned a biographical sketch of Laman Blanchard, prefixed to his essays, in 1846; the author's "Inaugural Address to the Associated Societies of the University of Edinburgh," delivered on the occasion of his being elected first honorary president, and printed in 1854; his "Address to the Students of Glasgow University," on his first election as Lord Rector; many valuable critical articles and essays in the *Quarterly, Edinburgh and Westminster Reviews*; his remarkable treatise in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* on the "Reign of Terror, and the French Revolution;" a fanciful and humorous little volume entitled the "Coming Race;" the brilliant story of the "Parisians" in *Blackwood's Magazine*, left unfinished; and "Kenelm Chillingley," now passing through the press, his lordship having completed its revision only the day before his death.

Lord Lytton has been twice elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University—an honour never bestowed on any other Englishman, and only in the instance of one Scotchman, Thomas Campbell.

On the accession of the Conservative party to power under Lord Derby, in 1858, Sir Bulwer Lytton was selected by the Premier as one of his colleagues in the Cabinet, with the appointment of Secretary of State for the Colonies. In the single year during which he was in office (retiring with his colleagues in 1859) he abolished the monopoly involved in the licence of the Hudson's Bay Company, called into existence the noble colony of British Columbia, and removed the discontents and developed the resources of the magnificent district now called Queensland by raising it into a colony separate from Sydney. Both these settlements have evinced gratitude to their founder in associating their rise with his administration, and a town in each, which may hereafter be an industrious centre of commerce and art, bears the name of Lytton.

Soon after the accession to power of Lord Derby's third Administration, in July, 1868, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was raised to the peerage, as Baron Lytton, of Knebworth.

As a Parliamentary speaker, Lord Lytton may be classed as one of the most finished orators of his time, rather than as a frequent debater; he never rose to address the House without winning the most earnest and respectful attention.

Among his successful services to the cause of literature—notably his valuable efforts in securing

copyrights for dramatic authors, and his kindly acts to its professors—his zealous and substantial support of "the Guild of Literature and Art" deserves special mention. He not only made to it a gift of the proceeds of the play he wrote for its benefit, but presented to the institution a piece of land as a site for the erection of homes for decayed artists and men of letters, to which pensions are attached.

It forms no part of our purpose to venture on criticism, beyond the expression of a general opinion of an eminent author's merits, but we cannot sum up those of Lord Lytton more concisely than by quoting the following words, applied to him by an able and independent critic:

"While ranking among the most popular authors in Britain since Scott, he is perhaps, of recent English writers, the one whose works are best known on the Continent. His novels are read, or translated, not only in France, Germany, etc., but in the remote parts of Hungary. While in America he is as popular as with us."

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXI.

In her haste to get the doctor to the side of poor Mrs. Heartwell Mary neither thought to close the door when she went out of the house nor did she notice the absence of Mr. Zane when she returned. She knew where he was when she went out, for he had asked her a question.

She took the doctor at once up to the bedside where her young mistress was fanning the old lady and bathing her head with lavender water, and was gratified to hear the doctor say that she was getting better and would soon be on her feet. It was nervous weakness, nothing more.

He gave her some stimulating drops, and ordered her to be left to rest for a couple of hours. Then she could have a cup of tea and some light broth, or something of the kind.

"How is Mr. Zane to-day?" asked the doctor of Anna after his new patient had been attended to.

"Oh, he is a great deal better—almost well!" said Anna, with a smile. "I left him in the sitting-room. Did you not see him as you passed through on your way here?"

"No, madam; I am sure there was no one in the sitting-room when I passed."

"Mary, where is Mr. Zane?" asked Anna, not dreaming that he could have gone out.

"Maybe in his chamber, ma'am, for he spoke to me when I ran for the doctor."

"Go see, my good girl. Maybe he feels worse and has lain down. Tell him the doctor is here. You will find us in the sitting-room."

Mary hurried off, and leaving Mrs. Heartwell to rest in quiet, Mrs. Zane preceded the doctor to the sitting-room.

"Edward feels quite happy now, sir," she said to the doctor. "He says the craving appetite for drink which he felt for the first two days, and which it seemed almost impossible to resist, has passed away. His appetite is becoming natural, and his head so clear. Oh, doctor, you cannot imagine how happy I am!"

"Such a true, brave-hearted little woman as you, and such a good nurse and fond wife, ought to be happy!" said the doctor.

"Well, Mary, what is the matter?"

The girl stood in the doorway with a worried expression in her face.

"The master!" she stammered, at last—"the master—he's not in the bed-room above nor in the best parlour, nor in the kitchen, ma'am. And his hat and cane are gone from the rack in the hall!"

"Oh! merciful Heaven! Can he have gone out without saying a word to me?" gasped poor Anna. "No, no—I will not believe it. He must be in the house. I—I will look myself!"

But she trembled so when she rose that the doctor saw she was completely overcome, and he begged her to sit down.

"He may have gone out for medicine, if he has gone out at all," said he. "I will step round to the chemist's near by and see if I can find him."

"Oh, doctor! if his appetite for drink has come on him and he has gone to break his solemn pledge, then my heart will break."

"We will hope that it is not so, dear lady. Be calm, take courage and hope for the best."

The doctor hurried away, too kind-hearted to stay there and witness her mental suffering, and sought far and near for some clue to the missing man.

He could find none.

He was more than an hour gone.

When he returned Mrs. Zane saw in his face, before he spoke, that he had been unsuccessful.

"I cannot get even a trace of him," he said.

"I know not what to do," murmured Mrs. Zane.

"Until father comes back to advise me I must fold my arms and weep."

"May I not go to the police station?"

"Oh, no, doctor—not for worlds. I would not have my poor husband exposed even if he has fallen. And I hope—oh, I pray to Heaven, he has not. If he has it is not his fault. I know he loves me. And for my sake as well as his own he promised to keep his pledge."

"We will hope he has. Do not get excited about it, or you will be ill. I must go now, for I have patients to visit. But I will return by-and-by to see if you have good news for me."

"Thank you, doctor."

The moment he was gone Mrs. Zane said:

"Mary, go and call a cab. I am going out."

"Oh, not alone, ma'am—not alone."

"Yes, alone, Mary. I must find where my husband is. I shall go mad if I do not. I tried to be calm while the doctor stayed, but it was a hard effort."

"Where will you go to?"

"To his club first; if he is not there, then to the house of that vile creature, Stella Hayden. I know the number."

"Oh, please, ma'am, let me go. They'll insult or abuse a pretty creature like you, and maybe do worse—but they'll let an ugly old woman like me alone. If they don't they'll get the worst of it. Tell me where and I'll go, ma'am."

"Mary, you are very good and kind. But some one must stay in the house. I could not stay here, feeling as I do."

"Then please, ma'am, let me go for that good man that gave us the pledge to sign. He'll go with you, I'm sure. He's little but he's brave, I could see it in his eye."

"Do you know where Mr. Merritt lives?"

"To be sure I do, ma'am, for he told me if any trouble came to the master where to find him."

"Then go, Mary, go, and tell him because father is away I want some one to advise me. You needn't tell him all, Mary."

And if I did tell him all we either of us know now, 'twouldn't surprise him much I'm sure. But I'll tell him to come along with me just as fast as he can."

"Do, Mary; you may as well take a cab, for you'll be quicker back."

Mary ran down to the kitchen, got her bonnet, and hurried away, while Mrs. Zane went softly upstairs to see if Mrs. Heartwell slept.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"THERE has been foul play somewhere," was the very first expression of Mr. Merritt when Mary told him that Mr. Zane had been suddenly missed from home, and that as Mr. Evans was away Mrs. Zane had begged his advice and consulting aid. "I do not believe that Mr. Zane would willingly leave his young wife now that he is entirely sober. A drunken man will do anything, for he does not know what he is about. But the hour I spent last evening with Mr. and Mrs. Zane satisfied me that he was not only clear headed but honest and earnest in his reform. My word for it there is foul play somewhere."

This he said while hastening to a cab, for he instantly responded to a call for help in a case in which he felt so deep an interest.

In the cab he talked with Mary—the good little man couldn't live without talking, his steam was always up, and the valve must work or the boiler would explode—and thus the time flew until the cab stopped before the door of Mr. Zane.

"You'll please wait for the mistress," said Mary as she turned to the driver when she got out and hurried to open the door with her latch-key for Mr. Merritt.

The latter a few minutes later stood in the presence of Mrs. Zane.

He expected to find her bowed down in grief, but, to his surprise, she was calm, though sad and pale. She was dressed ready to go out.

The heroic fortitude of a true woman was nerving her now.

"Mary," said she, "Mr. Merritt and myself will go immediately to the place I spoke of in search of Mr. Zane. Should we not find him there we will return. If father comes back before I do, ask him to wait here for me."

"Yes, ma'am. Anything else, ma'am?"

"Yes, look often to Mrs. Heartwell, upstairs; the old lady sleeps now. When she awakes get her a cup of tea and something nice to eat."

"I will, ma'am. And should the young master come in, what then?"

"Ask him to please wait for me here—say merely I have gone on an errand and will soon be back. It is not necessary to say what errand."

"I understand you, ma'am, and will do your bidding."

Mrs. Zane gave the driver his instructions, and in

a very short time they were at the door of the club.

"Will you not remain in the cab and let me go in and see if he is there?" asked Mr. Morrill.

"No, I thank you," said Anna, firmly; "you can go with me, if you please, but I will go into the club-room. A husband should never enter a place where his wife may not also go."

The brave little woman was right.

Save into some ancient and benevolent society, which, from its earliest date, has excluded females from its secret conclaves, there is no fit spot for a true man, aside from the battle-field, that a woman, especially a wife, should not have a right to stand in.

Mr. Morrill handed Mrs. Zane from the cab; and together they entered the parlour of the club-house.

A man, genteelly dressed, apparently a kind of upper servant, advanced and asked if they had not mistaken the place.

"My husband, Mr. Zane, is a member of this club; is he here?"

"No, madam—he has not been here for several days."

"Then the Count Volchink or Mr. Barnabas Bledge—either of them can give me the information that I desire, probably."

"They both went to Croydon by the eleven o'clock train last night, madam."

"To Croydon! are you sure?" said Mr. Morrill, quickly.

"Yes, sir. There is some event coming off there which both wished to attend—a billiard contest, I think."

Mrs. Zane turned away, for she knew that now she must go to even a worse place than that club-house—that den of thieving gamblers—she must go to the house of Stella Hayden.

"That man uttered a falsehood!" said Mr. Morrill when he handed Mrs. Zane into the cab. "The man, Barnabas Bledge, who was pointed out to me one night by a detective when I was on some missionary work, passed my place in an open carriage not an hour before your servant came after me!"

"Was he alone?" asked Mrs. Zane.

"Yes, alone, and the carriage was going very fast—the reckless driving attracted my attention."

"Then as surely as we live those bad men are in this mischief. We will go at once to the house of that woman!" said Mrs. Zane.

The driver was spoken to, and in a short time he drew up before the door of Stella Hayden's house.

Mr. Morrill with Mrs. Zane on his arm rang the bell. There was no answer. After waiting three or four minutes, he rang again and again without avail.

Then he noticed a bill on the wall near the basement door. He bent down and read:

"This House To Let, apply to Mr. Gordon, House Agent, etc."

"This is a trick. She is here yet. We will get police aid and enter the house," cried Mrs. Zane.

And she beckoned to a policeman who seemed to be leisurely patrolling his beat and was then coming toward them.

"Is this house occupied or vacant, sir?" she asked.

"Vacant, I think, ma'am—at least I saw some people who I know lived here going away in a carriage, and a baggage waggon carried away a lot of trunks."

"Did you see who got into the carriage?"

"No, ma'am; I was some distance off at the time, and it was not my business to take notice. I think there were two ladies and two gentlemen, but I wouldn't be sure—I was thinking of something else at the time."

"You could not describe any of the parties?"

"No, ma'am—I am sure I could not."

"Oh, Heaven, help me! We must go home!" sighed Mrs. Zane. "If he has not returned we must put the police to work, advertise, do everything that can be done to save my poor husband. Oh, I would die for him."

And the true, noble little woman wept, the tears falling from her soft, hazel eyes like dew from Heaven. Oh, that they had fallen for one worthier than Edward Zane.

(To be continued.)

THE TONGUE.—Nothing but the proboscis of an elephant compares in muscular flexibility with the tongue. It varies in length and shape in reptiles, birds and mammals, according to the peculiar organic circumstances of each. A giraffe's tongue has the functions of a finger. It is hooked over a high branch, its strength being equal to breaking off large, strong branches of trees, from which the tender leaves are then stripped. An ant-bear's tongue is long and round like a whip-lash. The animal tears open dry clay walls of ant-hills, thrusts in its tongue, which sweeps round the apartments, and by its adhesive saliva brings out a yard of ants

at a sweep. The mechanism by which it is protruded so far is both complicated and beautiful. A dog's tongue in lapping water takes a form by a mere act of volition that cannot be imitated by any ingenious mechanism. The human tongue in the articulation of language surpasses in variety of motions the wildest imaginations of a poet. Even in swallowing food its office is so extraordinary that physiologists cannot explain the phenomenon of deglutition without employing the aid of several sciences.

PARENTAL FALSEHOODS.

A FEW evenings since I was in company at the house of a friend, and among the party was a lady, who had brought with her a daughter of some five years, to play with the children of the hostess.

This child of the lady guest was a bright, beautiful, buoyant sprite; she observed of all observers, and the pet of the company. Naturally enough, under the influence of the occasion, the little miss became joyous and jubilant, and, as her elders urged her on, she verged toward romphness.

Her mother had to restrain her, and at length, as the child ventured upon an unusual escapade, she said to her, with calm severity:

"Kitty, if you do that again I shall punish you when I get home."

And yet, in half an hour, Miss Kitty had forgotten the admonition, and in a heedless moment the forbidden thing was repeated.

Her mother looked sorrowfully upon her child, and the countenance of the little one fell, nor was she blithe again during the remainder of the evening.

One of the company, observing the dejection of the little girl, and guessing its cause, patted her upon the head and bade her not to be downhearted.

"I'll ask your mother not to punish you, Kitty!"

"Oh," cried the child, looking up with the light of a sudden hope fading out through gathering tears. "My mother will punish me—I know she will. She said she should—and she never tells falsehoods."

The would-be comforter was hushed and confounded. Perhaps the simple reply of the erring child opened to her mind a view of her own tenderness in matters of family government.

I thought, as I heard the reply of the little one, that it afforded a complete life-lesson which might be considered under two heads:—First, Keep your word to your children. That is the great virtue which must shine in the domestic government. Second, Never threaten what you do not calmly intend to perform. This is the underlying rule of the whole governmental structure. It is very simple, but like many other simple things, it is easily forgotten. It is a great complexity. It is a great blessing to preach that it is so; but it is, nevertheless, a blessed thing to practice all the domestic virtues that are attainable.

S. C.

COURTSHIP.

Do not smile at the above suggestive title, girls; but give me your undivided attention for a few moments. In these degenerate days, when the whole duty of men and women seems to consist in pleasing themselves, often at the direct cost to others, when the most sacred ties are trodden under foot to secure the gratification of some pet vanity or ambition, it is as well to pause and think a little of your responsibilities, and determine whether you are capable of taking on yourselves the burden which your womanhood must some time bring—the care-bringing, yet pleasant burden; for, despite all that may be said to the contrary, the best road that woman's feet can tread is reached by passing through the gate of matrimony, a road consecrated to wives and mothers, a road hard of passage sometimes, and set with many a snare of trouble and sorrow, yet, beautified by Heaven's own blossoms, little children, and well hedged in by earthly loves and duties.

I presume you are tired of being "lectured" on this subject, and think you can be told nothing new concerning the duties of wives. This is very probable, so I shall not touch upon this subject. Yet I must speak a warning word whether you choose to regard it or not.

Do you ever realize that courtship is to matrimony what the foundation wall is to a building? By meddling with so delicate a subject. Half the love-matches in the world are tarnished by errors unthinkingly committed during the probationary time called courtship. We all know that lovers are deceitful, never allowing their faults to appear to each other, if they can possibly avoid it. A youth generally considers his mistress an angel, unsouled by earthly stain; a maiden thinks her betrothed a hero, exalted as the gods; and only when matrimony renders the position of each secure is the veil which conceals their faults torn away, sometimes with no gentle hand. Therefore, girls, as you value your future happiness

study well the characters of your lovers; watch each trait as it reveals itself, and decide whether that trait will clash with any of your own characteristics; and, if so, whether love will teach you to endure such clashing, or, still better, prevent it. Eatene no fault on either side lightly; but test your own and his capability of endurance; you will need to be thoroughly informed on this point, I promise you, for wedded life is not all milk and honey, and forbearance and patience and ready forgiveness are needed by both husband and wife. If you have them not won before you.

Never deceive the man whom you intend to make master of your destiny; never tell him an untruth, even if, by so doing, you commit evil that good may follow, for good never yet came through evil. And when you have calmly resolved to marry the man of your choice so act that the husband can never reproach the maiden to whom he was the lover.

I once knew a sweet girl whose whole happiness was wrecked by one little act of deceit. It was her misfortune to become attached to a man of an extremely jealous temperament. Her she was fully aware of his peculiar disposition she allowed herself to be drawn into a "harmless flirtation," as she termed it, with a favourite cousin. "Just to make him jealous, you know," she said. Her lover chanced to see a fugitive look to overhear a stray word. He questioned her with assumed easiness on the subject; she answered him playfully, and, from very girlish nonsense, affected to be much interested in the cousin, who had ever been regarded only as a brother by her. But she repented of her folly when he broke into passionate reproaches and regrets, and, only anxious to allay the storm she had raised, denied everything, even her lover's accusations, which were true, and the trivial incident which had caused them. He gave her one startled look, then turned very pale, and said, slowly:

"Myrtle, you have just told me a deliberate falsehood. I shall never trust you again."

And he never did. They separated then, but, after a short time, became reconciled, offered mutual apologies, and, still loving each other dearly, married. But to the day of her death, my friend never regained the full confidence of her husband, though she had deceived him only once.

"The suspicious, overbearing tyrant!" I hear you say, girls. Yes, I acknowledge that the case I have cited is an extreme one; but it carries a lesson, notwithstanding. You may toss your heads saucily, and say, "ah! my George!"—or Will or Robert, or whoever he may be—"would not dare resent any of my flirtations, and, if he finds me out in a little fib, I just laugh at him." All very well now, young lady; but take care lest in time to come the husband shall tell you what the lover would not—"I cannot trust your word. I lost faith in that long ago."

Believe me everything in life is based on the same rule:—from the acorn grows the oak, from the rill the ocean, the inextinguishable fire from a tiny spark. And so our little errors, growing, magnifying over, come home to us, finally, undermining the respect of both self and neighbour.

Girls, think of this. Be cautious. Let conscience guide you in all the small details of action. Be true to yourselves; and, inhumanly towards others. And remember that woman's most dazzling crown is neither beauty nor wit, but priceless truth.

A. D.

FACTIE.

THE marriage of Edward A. Flint to Miss Henrietta Steel, shows that the spark produced "a tinder glow."

QUESTION AND ANSWER IN NEW GEOGRAPHY. Q.—Where are the Sandwich Islands?

A.—Near to the Knife and Forkland Isles.—Punch.

A REFLECTION.—Most men wish to stand well with the world, yet in these days of heavy assessments how few of us there are who would not much rather be under-rated than over-rated.—Punch.

WHERE you have a bone on your plate, and are obliged to take it up in your fingers, don't neglect to mention that "fingers were made before knives and forks." The novelty of the remark will immediately strike the company very happily.

IN AT ONE YEAR AND OUT AT THE OTHER. Vendor of Almanacs: "Well, erum, almanacs is almanacs this year—and they'll be dearer next."

Old Lady: "You don't say so! Then I'd better take 'em a dose at once."—Punch.

"SMALL MESSAGES."

Young Lady: "Hello, Grammies, how are you? What's the matter? I hear you've had a legacy left you! My dear fellow, I congratulate you!"

Grammies (blanly)—he never could look at the bright side of things: "Oh, but a fellow can't expect more than one in his lifetime, and this is only

ten pounds; and the estate's in Chancery!"—[They liquor up dependently].—Punch.

RIGHTY, TIGHTY!

A contemporary states that winter has set in with vigour in America:

Oh Christmas Eve the thermometer at Milwaukee stood at 30 below zero, Fahrenheit.

More foolish 't for standing! If it had run about it would not have errored so far in height.—Punch.

"HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY."

Host (really in agony about his political infidel floor): "Haden't you better come on the carpet, old fellow? I'm so afraid you might slip, you know."

Guest (with a wooden leg): "Oh, it's all right, old fellow—thanks! There's a nail at the end, you know!"—Punch.

CUMULATIVE JURISDICTION.

Commanding Officer: I don't know what to do with you, Smithers—always in trouble. If I made myself into a Regimental Court-Martial, I'd give you forty-two days!"

Smithers: "Can't do that, sir, would be illegal!"

Commanding Officer: "Another word, and I constitute myself 'A District,' and you'll get eighty-four days!" [Smithers is astounded].—Punch.

ONLY A SLIGHT MATTER. — A Dutch farmer in Canada overheard an unusually loud hallooing on the part of his neighbour, another farmer. He walked slowly to the gap where the voice proceeded, and the following brief conversation ensued: "Shon, vot is it matter?" "Ven, den," says John, "I was trying to climb on to de top of dish high stone wall, and I fell off and broke my leg and ribs." "Is dat all?" "Vy, you hallowing pig fellow, I tet you got too-ahle."

THINGS WE SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

Why, when school-children have their dinners they eat, but when they are fed on duns they are "regaled"?

Why, when you buy a clock, it is called a clock, but when it is presented to you it is a "time-piece"?

Why, when you have a party at your own house you keep it up till all's blue, whereas if you go to a public ball, "festivities are prolonged till an early hour"?—Punch.

NOT TO BE HEARD.

Mrs. Brown (whose daughter has just been performing admirably on the piano-forte): "Do your daughters play, Mrs. Jones?"

Mrs. Jones (whose four daughters have only been listening): "No."

Mrs. Brown: "Sing?"

Mrs. Jones: "No."

Mrs. Brown: "Paint in water-colours?"

Mrs. Jones: "No. We go in for beauty!"—Punch.

EASILY ACCOUNTED FOR.

Pater: "Ernest, a word! You were in turn deplorably dull and vulgarly flippanst at dinner last night. My dear boy, you grieved me. Surely you had not been taking—no; you could not be so—How was it?"

Filius: "My dear father, it shall never happen again. I am heartily sorry. Drinking?—no. The fact is I had looked in here and the only paper disengaged—it always is—was the *Saturday Review*. I read too much of it. I am quite ashamed."

[They shake hands, and retreat].—Punch.

A SAD LOSS-ENGET!

Mamma: "Edith, why did you cry when the singing began in church last Sunday, when you went with grandpa?"

(No answer).

Mamma: "You did not cry to-day when you went with Mary."

Edith: "No, ma."

Mamma: "Then why did you do so last Sunday?"

Edith: "No, ma."

Mamma: "Then what was it?"

Edith: "Grandpa put a lozenge in his mouth and didn't give me one."—Punch.

RATHER HARD LINES.

This is an advertisement from an Irish paper. Please to read verbatim:

Wanted by a gentleman board and schooling for a boy, aged thirteen years, of a bad turn of mind, and given to lying; intended for the sea; terms from 16l. to 18l. per annum, payable monthly. Address, &c.

What has the sea done that so objectionable a youth should be thrown into it? Why must respectable fishes? And if he is to be drowned, what is the use of wasting money on his board and schooling? But if by the sea is meant the service, the British Marine is really much indebted to the advertiser. What we find and love in that service is, among many other excellent qualities, a good turn of mind (whatever the "gentleman" means) and an absolute hatred of lying. Lastly, we would remark that, however desperately and outrageously wicked a boy of thirteen may be, his faults are probably due to those who have brought him up badly,

and it is dealing a child rather hard measure to prejudice the mind of any better tutor against him. However, 'tis an Irish advertisement, and an "affectionate people" has its own ways.—Punch.

A GENTLEMAN'S TEMPER OF HIS WIFE'S TEMPER.

Monday.—A thick fog, no seeing through it.

Tuesday.—Gloomy, and very chilly, unreasonable weather.

Wednesday.—Frosty, at times sharp.

Thursday.—Bitter cold in the morning, red sunset, with flying clouds, portending hard weather.

Friday.—Storm in the morning, with peals of thunder, air clear afterwards.

Saturday.—Gleams of sunshine, with partial thaw, frost again at night.

Sunday.—A light southwester in the morning, calm and pleasant at dinner time, hurricane and earthquake at night.

MY HALLOW-EEN STORY.

SHALL I tell you my Halloween story? No legend of goblins or sprites; Only this: In the firelight and quiver

Came answer, once Halloween night, To cries stifled low in my bosom,

To yearnings that Heaven's only knew, To see, if I might, the fair woman

Who sleeps underneath the dark yew. I sat by the hearth-stone in silence,

As the edge of the gold-stitch'd rim, That touched with its radiant glory

The dusk-woven shadow has dim, I saw where the glitter was brightest

The shimmer of golden-hair'd hair, The gleam of an eye upward glancing,

The cheek, rounded, muggy and fair. Daughter Daisy, who crept to my keeping

From the desolate edge of a grave, Who, with gentle blue-eyes softly lifted,

Ne'er shows me the one look I crave: Pretty Daisy, my motherless darling,

Who wears her own innocent grace, Yet o'er her brow, broad and sunny,

Shows never the dark vanished face. Then, lo! in the Halloween gloaming

Came answer to that I had sought, And the mystical glow of the firelight

New lines on the living face wrought, Till out of the quivering shadow—

'Till up from the face at my knee— The sweet, wistful look of the mother

Came softly, yet surely, to me.

In glow of the truth-telling daylight

It shrouded itself from my sight, But to come in the mystical roving

That curtains all Halloween night, To comfort and bless me, and cheer me,

As though she had crossed the dark line To kiss the fair face of her daughter,

And lay her hands softly in mine.

E. L.

GEMS.

SILENCE is the safest course for any man to adopt who distrusts himself.

LOVE is the essence of truth, and truth is the most powerful tyrant; it tyrannizes over the truth.

THE voice of conscience is so delicate that it is easy to stifle it; but as it is also so clear that it is impossible to mistake it.

None are so fond of secrets as those who do not mean to keep them; such persons cover secrets, as the spendthrift covets money, for the purpose of circulation.

FIND fault when you must find fault, in private, if possible; and some time after the offence rather than at the time. The blamed are too inclined to resist when they are blamed without witnesses; both parties are calmer, and the accused party is struck with the forbearance of the accuser, who has some time to mention it.

THE EMPRESS OF CHINA.—There are some stock current which if true would indicate that the young

Empress of China must be a person of some decision of character. She is said to be able to read and write her own language, accomplishments which are not uncommon among Chinese women, but the

Empress is said to be well read, and a high proficient in Chinese literature, and it was this merit which won her the imperial prize in the competitive

contest which had been instituted. One morning, shortly after her marriage, she was exhibiting her

capacity of writing to the Emperor, and he was astonished at the beauty of the characters she formed. They were thus engaged; she was making quotations from books when an official announced that breakfast was ready. The Empress turned round on the attendant, and with indignation asked if she was to be interrupted in the high delights of literature by such a commonplace affair as eating and drinking. This sort of thing would seem rather melodramatic if it came from a young lady in England, but to the Chinese mind it has not this look about it. They have had literary Emperors of whom they are proud, and a literary Empress will be quite to their taste.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SPINACH.—Pick and wash perfectly clean two three pounds of spinach, put it into a sauce-pan with a little water, and let it boil till quite done. Turn it out on a hair-sieve to drain, throw the water away, and pass the spinach through the sieve. Put a good lump of butter into a sauce-pan, with a pinch of flour; mix well, add the spinach, pepper, and salt to taste, and a little milk, stir well and serve.

CHICKEN CHINESE.—Did our readers ever eat any? Boil two chickens till tender; take out all the bones and chop the meat fine; season to taste with salt, pepper, and butter; pour in enough of the liquor they were boiled in to make it moist. Mould it in any shape you please, and, when cold, turn out and cut into slices. It is excellent for travelling lunch.

STATISTICS.

THE REVENUE.—The Revenue Tables, containing the gross produce of the income of the United Kingdom up to the end of the year, have been published. From these it appears that there has been an increase on the Customs of 515,000l., Excise 2,069,000l., Stamps 328,000l., Taxes 21,000l., Property Tax 2,948,000l., Post-office 170,000l., and Telegraph Service 220,000l., making a total of 6,188,000l. From this has to be deducted decrease on Crown lands 10,000l., and on Miscellaneous 698,191l., making a net increase of 5,479,809l. Mr. Lowe will, after paying for the "Alabama," stupidity, have a balance of over two millions; and he will be able to take off taxes to the extent of nearly six millions, if, as it is only rational to expect, the income of this year should equal the last. The way to abolish the income-tax and take off the stigma of breaking faith with the nation, and setting it the example of unjust dealing, lies in the path of Government.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A MARRIED pair in Kentucky, aged respectively 19 and 23, have applied to the courts for a guardian. China has a new national flag. It is of a triangular shape, made of bunting, of a deep yellow colour, with a blue dragon "crouching" in the centre.

It is reported from Kormanshah that about the middle of September an earthquake occurred, and 1,800 people perished at Soongur, a short distance off.

We learn that the letter-carriers in the New York post-office will soon receive a new uniform. It will be highly appropriate, consisting of a coat of mail. This is because the carriers are so uniformly courteous.

THE ANDOS.—South American papers announce the discovery of a new pass across the Andes, with a grade never greater than 25 feet per thousand. It is called Los Palos, and on the Chilean side follows the course of the Aconcagua river.

QUININE.—Quinine is found to possess, in a very marked degree, the property of preventing certain forms of decomposition, and of checking putrefaction and alcoholic fermentation. Hare G. Binn believes, from his recent researches, that it is capable of arresting putrefaction in the blood.

We have to announce the death, at the age of 75, of Mr. Le Bas, member of the Institute, retired engineer of the Marine, who superintended the conveyance to Paris from Egypt of the obelisk of Luxor, and effected its erection on the Place de la Concorde in 1836.

UNRUI CHINA.—Less than six miles from Sedgfield may be seen, on the Durham road, the entire corn crop grown in 1872 on one of the farms. Four fields present themselves to view, three of oats and one of barley, nearly all uncut. In the parish of Marshfield, Gloucestershire, there are still in the field twenty-seven acres of barley, one half of which is uncut. The field is the seat of thousands of wood pigeons, which afford sport to the young men of the neighbourhood.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. S.—Your new year's poem would be somewhat out of date by this time; besides which, it seems rather commonplace, though the actual versification is perfectly fair. Thanks for your communication.

W. R.—Commonplace but neat. Cannot you alter the phrase "what betide"? It is not strictly wrong, but in its present connection it jars on the ear when read. "Turned away" is a bad title; something like "Rejected" would be preferable.

W. N. K.—Praiseworthy for a first attempt, but too juvenile. With care, however, we quite think you will produce something good by and by. Read freely our best poets, not for mere imitation but for improvement. The word estimates is far too prosaic for a poet's purpose. Try again.

TOBY.—See our reply to "Incognita." The cause is internal, and so therefore must be the remedy. Get a mixture of taraxacum and a few drops of muriatic acid, and take thrice daily. You need not relinquish all malt liquor. And use as generous a diet as possible. Stick to the prescription given, and you will gradually get into better health.

READER.—Grease may be removed from cloth and furs by means of a little soap and ox-gall dissolved in hot water. The spots of grease or dirt must first be touched with the liquid all over, and then well rubbed with a hard brush until they are removed, after which they may be well rubbed all over with a sponge dipped in some water to which the previous mixture and a little more ox-gall have been added.

KITTY S.—I. There is such a club, and it has we rather think given occasional performances in the St. George's Hall. Perhaps you might venture to apply to the editor of the *Theatrical Journal*—which serial seems specially to concern itself about the things you mention. 2. The cost of the printing of your tale depends wholly upon the length of it and upon the quality of paper, kind of type, etc., you require. Any printer would give you an estimate.

CURLY.—Would you kindly repeat you question more fully, as we entirely fail to comprehend it? You ask whether we can inform you "of some of the Dogs' Homes, and if I could obtain one by payment or otherwise." Obtain what? A dog's home, or a dog? If it is only a dog, you can readily purchase one without going to any home. As your question is stated it literally implies that you desire to purchase a dog's home. But you could hardly mean that. Dogs are easy of purchase.

H. R. T.—The term waistcoat originally signified an under garment reaching to the waist. It afterwards became the principal male garment, and superseded the doublet; but in the seventeenth century it resumed its original form. Peeps in 1663 mentions seeing the Queen in "a white-laced waistcoat." During the reign of Charles the Second (1660–1685) gentlemen wore waistcoats reaching to the knees, and this fashion continued till about 1773, when the members of the Macaroni Club introduced short waistcoats.

ELLEN G.—We are glad that you have asked us, because there are most important reasons why you should consult a respectable ordinary practitioner of ability; and we most distinctly advise you to keep clear of all other people. Revelations frequently appear in the newspapers concerning the other order of men which are not nice. There are scores of able practitioners in Bristol. Consult one at once. That is the best, and we must add the cheapest way. When the man said that he alone could cure you he was guilty of a manifest falsehood. The malady is perfectly curable.

INCIGNITA.—Continue to press them out constantly. They are caused by an ill condition of the blood, and probably, remotely, by some derangement of the digestive organs. Till the cause is removed they will certainly continue to annoy you. The remedy must be internal, if it is to be any remedy at all. Use frequent ablutions, take as much exercise as possible, and have as generous a diet as you can get. Procure from a chemist's a mixture of taraxacum (which is our friend the despised but immensely useful dandelion) and muriatic acid; and when you have perspired in our directions for a few weeks you will find matters mending. The mixture mentioned should be taken thrice daily. 2. The usual course. 3. Too cramped; improvement quite easy.

ALICE.—The potato plant, a native of Chili and Peru, was brought to Europe by the Spaniards early in the sixteenth century, and, according to the generally received account, into England from Virginia by the colonists sent out by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584, who returned in July, 1586. Some authors contend that the plant was first described by Gaspar Bauhin, in 1590, and afterwards in-

troduced here. There is little doubt that some specimens were brought by Hawkins in 1595, and by Drake in 1585, though it did not at first attract much attention. For a long period the cultivation was limited to the garden, and it was not planted as a field crop in Scotland until 1731. By the middle of this century it was generally known throughout England. The potato disease first appeared near Leeds in 1842, broke out in Canada in 1844 and caused the failure of the potato crops in Ireland in 1845 and the four following years.

ALFRED.—The Chevalier Bayard was descended from a noble family in Dauphine, in which province he was born in 1476. So distinguished was his valour, and so eminently was he adorned with virtue, that he obtained the surname of *Le bon Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* (the good cavalier without fear and without reproach, or stainless and fearless). In 1495 he accompanied Charles VIII. into Naples, where he performed almost incredible acts of heroism; opposing at one time alone, upon a bridge, the united efforts of 300 knights. In 1499 he was employed by Louis XII. to subdue the Milanese. In 1512 he assisted Gaston de Foix in taking the city of Brescia; and in 1515 he fought by the side of Francis I. at the famous battle of Marignan. Being mortally wounded in 1524 in an action with the Imperialists in Italy, and perceiving his death rapidly approaching, he recommended himself to Heaven in fervent prayer, and then requested to be placed beneath a tree with his face towards the enemy, at that time victorious; saying: "As in life I always faced the enemy, so in death I will not turn my back upon them."

LOVE'S AWAKENING.

Unveil, unveil, dear Francis,
Thy radiant orbs of brown,
Put by thy drowsy broodery,
Put on thy silken gown;
Thy pearl-gemmed necklaces quickly
Clasp round thy neck so fair,
And in thy glossy ringlets
Bind rose-rich and rare;
For, see, your knight is coming!
He rideth hard and fast,
And of thy girlish beauty
This day may be the last.

Look up, look up, dear Francis!
The glorious stars so bright
Are rivalled by the beauty
Of your glowing eyes to-night;
Your cheeks are like twin roses,
Where smiles so sweetly play
I fain would be the lover,
To pluck those sweets away;
And your laugh's so like the ringing
Of silver bells in June
That the heart must be a-weary
It could not keep in tune.

Awake, awake, dear Francis!
The time for dreamy dreams
Is past and gone for ever
In the light of young Love's beams;
And the flowers of girlish friendship
Will droop and fade away
In the newly dawning glory
Of Love's awakening day;
Your soul's best room make ready,
Love comes—he will not wait;
Ah, rogue! your blushes tell me
He's knocking at the gate!

Ah, bonny, bonny Francis!
The breath of orange flowers
Comes gently wafted to thee
In youth's enchanted hours!
You have stolen life's best sunshine
To brighten your glad days
And stolen all our hearts too
With loving, winning ways;
But you knight, you knight is coming,
Lay friendship's armour down,
Put by its silver helmet,
Put on Love's golden crown. I. S. U.

EMMA, eighteen, gray eyes, dark curly hair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be dark, with good connections, tall, and about twenty.

GIRY, twenty-four, short, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about thirty, tall, fair, amiable, and fond of home.

R. C. E., twenty, light hair and eyes, loving, and would make a good husband. Respondent must be about eighteen, affectionate, and fond of home.

LOTTIE, twenty-four, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, and of fair complexion; a tradesman preferred.

MINNIE M., nineteen, fair hair, blue eyes, loving and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and affectionate.

NANNY, fat, fair, forty, and possessing a small fortune, wishes to correspond with a dark gentleman, cheerful, loving, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

D. F., thirty, tall, fair, has been away in America for some years, seeks an introduction to a single or widow lady, about or a little under his own age.

SAM F., twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., dark complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty, pretty, well educated, and affectionate.

ELIZA L., twenty, affectionate, and would make a good wife to a loving husband. Respondent must be about twenty-two, fair, handsome, fond of home, and possessing a good business.

SALLY K., nineteen, tall, fair, loving, domesticated, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, handsome, fair complexion, and of a loving disposition.

JACK SPEARPOLE, twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., in the Royal Navy, fair complexion, handsome, hair light and curly, bushy whiskers, and musically inclined. Respondent must be fond of children and home, and thoroughly domesticated.

RUSHTON, thirty-four, 5ft. 6in., a respectable home-loving mechanic, steady, and of a loving temper. Respondent must be pretty, medium height, fair complexion,

long dark or black hair, from twenty-six to twenty-eight, and thoroughly domesticated.

W. E., twenty-two, tall, light-brown hair, handsome, and of an affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady who is pretty, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

DORA, twenty-two, tall, dark, would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, dark, affectionate, and fond of home and children.

BETTY, twenty-one, tall, considered handsome, well educated, and is fond of children. Respondent must be about her own age, handsome, loving, and fond of home.

FRED G., twenty-four, handsome, and loving, would like to correspond with a young lady who is loving, fond of home and children, and able to make a home comfortable.

FRANCIS, nineteen, medium height, fair, and considered pretty, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two, handsome, and loving; a tradesman preferred.

WILL, twenty-two, tall, fair complexion, and a mechanic. Respondent must be about nineteen, loving, domesticated, accomplished, able to keep a home clean and comfortable.

WILLIAM SWAN, sixteen, tall, dark, good tempered, considered very pretty, and possessing a good income, would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman about nineteen; a midshipman in the Navy preferred.

MARY, twenty-eight, hazel eyes, dark-brown hair, medium height, fond of home and children. Respondent must be fond of home, a total abstainer, tall, respectably connected, dark complexion, and of musical tastes.

FAIRY, twenty, tall, light-brown hair, gray eyes, of a very loving disposition, and good tempered. Respondent must be tall, dark, twenty-four or twenty-five, and good tempered.

COLONIAL, 5ft. 9in., twenty-eight, fair hair and moustache, would like to correspond with a real English girl and take her to his own beautiful country or settle in this as she may desire.

BEUSETTE, twenty-one, medium height, brilliant complexion, dark-gray eyes, brown hair, musical, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, tall, and dark; a professional preferred.

BOARDSHIP PRIZE, twenty-four, tall, handsome, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young lady, tall, handsome, fond of children, and not more than twenty-two.

C. J. A., thirty-five, 5ft. 7in., good looking, steady, and industrious, with good expectations. Respondent must be tall, a good figure, and of a loving disposition; a milliner or dress-maker not objected to.

JACK HARTIN, twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., in the Royal Navy, considered good looking, dark curly hair and whiskers, and musically inclined. Respondent must be handsome.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

DANIEL is responded to by—"Annie G.," eighteen, tall, fair complexion, gray eyes, auburn hair, fine looking, amiable, loving, and fond of home; a respectable mechanic's daughter.

JAMES Z. S. by—"Henrietta H.," fair, blue eyes, and thinks he would quite suit her.

TOM STORMSAIL by—"Hettie," twenty-two, fair, medium height, of a loving nature, and very domesticated.

ALBERT by—"Maud," twenty, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

ARTHUR S. by—"Emma," who offers him a true heart and undivided love.

AGNES by—"F. H.," twenty, rather dark, and is all "Agnes" requires.

JACK SKYTAIL by—"Emily A.," twenty, tall, good tempered, fond of home, and thinks she would suit him.

G. A. C. by—"Lively Lizzie," twenty, fair, blue eyes, auburn hair, medium height, good tempered, domesticated, and would make a loving wife.

THOMAS by—"Dorothy," twenty-one, dark, brown hair and eyes, affectionate, accomplished, and would make a good wife.

MAURICE D. by—"L. W.," twenty-five, a tradesman's daughter, dark, domesticated, intelligent, loving and fond of home.

W. R. by—"A Derbyshire Lass," twenty-four, tall, dark, domesticated, and loving, who thinks she could make W. R.'s home a very happy one.

WILLIS by—"Jennie," twenty-four, medium height, a blonde, light curling hair, musical, of a good family, and considered very pretty.

JACK MAINSAIL by—"Black Eyed Susan," twenty-three, dark, good tempered, fond of home, and affectionate.

HAPPY-IF-LUCKY by—"Bright Eyes," seventeen, medium height, good tempered, and thinks she would make him happy.

TED A. T. by—"Emmy," eighteen, pretty, with dark eyes and hair, domesticated, well educated, fond of home, and would make a good little wife.

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